

SAINT PAULS.

APRIL, 1870.

THE THREE BROTHERS.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PROGRESS.

BEFORE Frank returned to his quarters, he had received his mother's promise that she would call at Richmond. "I have given up all that sort of thing on my own account," Mrs. Renton had said. "I will never go into society again. All that is over for me; and I hope your friends understand so. I can't entertain people, you know; but anything that is for my boy's interests," the mother said, magnanimously, sitting up among her pillows,—that was quite a different matter. Fifty thousand pounds going a-begging, so to speak, when such a small affair as her own card, or, at the worst, ten minutes' talk, might determine the house to which it should come! There could be no doubt about a mother's duty in such circumstances. Laurie, it was true, was out of the way; but there was no reason why Frank should not take advantage of such a windfall. Mrs. Renton's mind was not troubled by any of the scruples that moved Mary Westbury. Perhaps,—it was so long since it had come in her way,—love had lost its importance in her eyes. Perhaps she had never felt its necessity in any very urgent way. Mr. Renton had been the best of husbands, but yet it could not be said that there had been much sentiment, not to say passion, in their union. But Mrs. Renton, like every other sensible woman, understood the value of fifty thousand pounds. She had already made a calculation in her own mind as to the income it would produce. "It can't possibly be at less interest than five per cent.,—with a father to manage it who knows all about money," she said. "Five per cent. on fifty thousand makes twenty-five hundred. They might take Cookiesley Lodge and live very comfortably on that; and I should

have them always near me." This reflection made Mrs. Renton not only willing, but anxious, to pay the promised visit. She questioned her son a great deal about Nelly before he left her. What she was like, and the colour of her hair, and her height, and a hundred other details. "If she is pretty it is so much the better," she said, with maternal indulgence for a young man's weakness. "I do not say anything, Frank," she told him, as she bade him good-bye, "for I see you are turning it over in your mind. And you know I am not mercenary, nor given to think about money. Alas! there are many things that money cannot do! It can't buy health when one has lost it. But it has always been my opinion that to marry young was the very best thing for a man. And, my dear boy, if it is in your power to secure your own happiness, and other things as well, I hope you will be guided for the best." She meant that she hoped he would be guided to the fifty thousand pounds. And Frank understood what she meant as well as if she had said it. Mrs. Renton had never been poor in her life, and yet she appreciated money; whereas Mary Westbury, who had been brought up in a very limited household, and by a very prudent mother, felt in this present instance a scorn for it which no words could express. When she went out to the door in the starlight to see her cousin off, her mind was full of thoughts half contemptuous, half bitter. There was no moon, but a soft visionary light in the skies, partly of the stars, partly that lingering reflection of light which makes a summer evening so beautiful. Mary stood in the dark shadow of the doorway and watched Frank getting into the dog-cart. She said her good-night with a certain plaintive tone. "Good-night! but you don't say good luck, Mary," cried Frank, as he lighted his cigar. She came out upon the steps, and looked up wistfully at him as he spoke. The shadows of the trees hung dark all round, swallowing up in gloom the road by which he was going; and in the opening, out of the shadow, Mary looked at him, and thought he looked half-defiant, half-deprecating, as he struck a light, which made his form visible for a moment. The horse was fresh, and stood with impatience waiting the signal to start. "Good-night," Mary repeated; "I don't know about the good luck:" and then he was suddenly whirled away into the darkness. The dog-cart was audible going down the long line of avenue to the gate which opened on the high-road, and now and then appeared for a moment out of the shadow where the trees separated. She felt melancholy to see the boy thus dashing forth, doubting and unguided, into the world. She was very little older than he was, and yet Mary kindly felt the insufficiency of Frank's youth to keep him in the straight way, much more keenly than he felt it himself. He was going, and nobody could tell what he was going to. And there was nobody to stand in his way and advise him. Thus Frank went out of sight, and the two ladies stopped behind with their

different thoughts. Mary was not alone in her knowledge of his intentions; the entire household was soon pervaded by a sense of the coming event. Mrs. Renton, as she took her arrowroot, could not but give a hint of what she supposed to be going on to her confidential maid, and that trusted creature was not reticent. "Mr. Frank's going to marry a lady as has made a terrible fuss about him," the butler said, "as rich,—as rich——! I hope, when he comes into his fortune, he'll have something done to keep us a-going here. It's hawful is this quiet,—and us as always had so much visiting." "He'll beat the old ones all to sticks," said the cook; "but I always said as Mr. Frank was the one." Thus it will be seen that he left a universal excitement behind him, and that of a favourable character. A wedding in prospect is always pleasant to everybody, and the servants' hall was as much impressed by the duty of marrying money as was their mistress. Only Mary in her heart, and one small housemaid, were sensible of the other side of the question. From Mrs. Renton, down to the boy who blacked the shoes, the feeling, with these two exceptions, was general. To have married for any other reason might have produced as many criticisms as congratulations. Frank would have been set down as too young,—a foolish boy; but to marry money was a thing so reasonable, that nobody could but applaud.

And Frank himself felt all its reasonableness as he returned to his quarters. He took the train at the Cookesley Station for Royalborough; and when he had to change carriages at Slowley junction, stood and kicked his heels on the platform, so absorbed in his thoughts that he had not leisure to be impatient. In every way it was the most reasonable, the most natural, the most feasible thing. He cast his eye round the county, as it were, as he stood waiting for the down-train. For a man who was going to settle down, no county could be better than Berks. It was his own county, in the first place, where his family were known and considered,—and then it had a hundred advantages. It was so near town that a man could run up for a day as often as it pleased him;—a good hunting county, with pleasant society, and the garrison at Royalborough, in which there were always sure to be some of his regiment, within reach. He cast his eye metaphorically over the district, and recollected that Cookesley Lodge was to let, and also that pretty house near St. Leonard's. Either of them, he thought, would do very well for a small establishment. So far as this his thoughts had advanced. He settled a great many things as he stood on the platform at the Slowley junction, and paced up and down with echoing feet, neither fuming nor fretting, absorbed in his own thoughts. The station-master kept out of Frank's way, in fear of being called to account for the lateness of the train; but he was too much occupied even to think of the train. To be sure, he could afford a good hunter or two

without interfering with the other needs of the ménage in respect of horses. He thought of everything,—from the little brougham and the pony-carriage, and the cart for his private use, down even to the dogs which should bark about the place, and hail him when he came home. He thought of everything,—except of the central figure who would bring all these luxuries in her hand. Certainly, he did not think of her. A chorus of barking terriers, pointers, mastiffs,—I know not how many kinds of dogs,—seemed already in his thoughts to bid him welcome as he drew near the imaginary house. But there was no representation in his mind of any sweeter welcome. He imagined the terriers, but not the wife running to the door to meet him. That he left out, and he was not even aware of the omission. On the whole, it grew pleasant to the eye,—this imaginary house. A Renton was sure of a good reception in the county which had known the family for hundreds of years; and if he wanted occupation, there was the Manor estate, left in the lawyer's hands only during the seven years' interregnum, which he could always keep an eye on; and his mother's interests, and her own property, which she would be so glad to have him at hand to see after. Cookesley, on the whole, would be the best. It was near the Manor, and not quite so near Richmond; and then there would be the river for the amusement of idle hours. It was a pleasant prospect enough. Youth, health, a good hunter, a pretty house, a pleasantly-assured position, and,—say at the least,—two thousand five hundred pounds a year! A man should have no call to mope who had all these good things. Something, it is true, he left out from the calculation, but there was enough to fill any man with very comfortable sensations in what remained.

Thus it happened that he had almost made up his mind when he got back to Royalborough. He had weighed all the arguments in favour of such a step, and had found them unanswerable. The arguments against,—what were they? It was, indeed, impossible to formalise them or set such weak pleas against the solid, sturdy weight of reason which lay on the other side. Indeed, there was nothing that could be called an argument,—certain wandering notes of music that now and then stole with a bewildering effect upon his ear,—faint, momentary visions of a face which was not Nelly's. But what then? To be fond of music is no reproach to a man, even if the future partner of his bosom does not play; and as for the face, why any face may spring up in your memory, and glance at you now and then by times without any blame of yours. Some people, as is well known, are haunted for days by a face in a picture; and what did it matter to anybody if Frank's imagination, too, were momentarily haunted by the picture which he had made of a certain sweet countenance?

He felt that he had quite made up his mind when he went to bed; but the morning brought back a certain uncertainty. What a pity

that Laurie could not have been got to do it,—Laurie, for whom it would have been so completely suitable ! leaving Frank free to go to India ! He could not but feel that this was indeed a spite of fortune. Laurie, poor fellow ! could not go to India,—he never would make his own way anywhere,—he would only moon about the world and make himself of use to other people ; and, so far as his own interests were concerned, would end just where he began. Whereas Frank felt confident that he himself could have made his way. And Laurie wanted somebody to take care of him, to give a practical turn to his dreamings, to keep him comfortable in his wanderings to and fro. If he could only be sent for from Italy even yet ! What could have tempted him to go to Italy at this time of the year, which everybody knew was the very worst time,—bad for health, and impossible for work ? Frank shook his head in his youthful prudence at the vagaries of those artist-folk. They never could be relied upon one way or another. They were continually doing things which nobody else did,—going away when they were wanted at home,—staying when they should go away. It must have been some demon which had put it into Laurie's head to take himself off at this particular moment, leaving to his conscientious brother the task of dealing with that fifty thousand pounds. Indeed, the morning light brought home to Frank more and more clearly the sense that this step he was contemplating was duty. The evening had had certain softening effects. The pretty little house, and the hunters, and the terriers, and all the pleasant country-gentleman occupations to which the young man had been born, came clearly before him at that pleasant hour. But, by daylight, it was the duty involved which was most apparent to Frank. He had no right to allow such an opportunity to slip through his fingers. If he did so, he might never have such a chance again. To neglect it was foolish,—wrong,—even sinful. He gave a little half-suppressed sigh as he sat down to breakfast, feeling strongly that high principle involved some inevitable pangs. But should he be the man to turn his back upon an evident duty because it cost him something ? No ! Ben might take the bit in his teeth and go out to America to make his fortune, like the headstrong fellow he was ; and Laurie might prefer his own foolish devices to every substantial advantage under heaven ; but Frank was not the man to run away. He could see what the exigencies of his position demanded, and he was not one to shirk his duty. And then, poor boy ! he rounded his deliberations by humming very dolefully a bar or two of a certain plaintive melody, and ended all by a sigh.

“Sighing like a furnace,” said Edgbaston, who came in unceremoniously, followed by Frank's servant with the kidneys,—for his thoughts did not much affect his appetite,—and his letters. “My dear fellow, that's serious. Ah, I see you have a card for the grand fête. We are all invited, I think.”

"What grand fête?" said Frank.

"There it is," said his friend, turning over the letters, and producing an enormous square envelope ornamented with a prodigious coat of arms in crimson and gold. "These are something like armorial bearings, you know. By Jove, people ought to pay double who go in for heraldry to that extent. Mine is not as big as a three-penny bit. It's a case of swindling the Exchequer. The arms of the great house of Rich, my boy. Don't you know?"

"There are Riches who are as good gentlefolks as we are," said Frank, already feeling that this scoff affected his own credit.

"Oh, better," cried Edgbaston. "We are only Brummagem,—I confess it,—with a pinchbeck coronet. But I doubt if our friends are of the old stock. Open and read, Frank; this day fortnight. Archery fête,—everything that is most alluring,—croquet, good luncheon, dance to wind up with. We're all going. Hallo! there's a note enclosed for you!"

"And why shouldn't there be a note enclosed?" said Frank, colouring high, and thrusting the small epistle under his other letters. "I suppose all of you had the same?"

"The card was thought enough for me," said Edgbaston. "Well, well, I don't repine. But I say, Frank, if you are going in for that in earnest, I see no use in carrying on about India. And I came to tell you of a fellow in the 200th who wants to get off going. Montague,—he's to be heard of at Cox's. You can do what you like about it, of course, but you can't go in for both."

"For both?" said Frank; "what do you mean? I don't know anything else I am going in for. Did you say Montague, of the 200th? Going to Calcutta, are they? Thanks, Edgbaston. I'll think it over. Of course one can't make one's mind up all at once."

"I advise you to think it well over," said his friend; "and the other thing, too. You may look as unconscious as you please, but you can't conceal that you are the favourite, Frank. And, by Jove, it shows her sense. She's as jolly a little thing as ever I saw, and there's no end to the tin. If I were in your place, I'd see India scuttled first. I don't know a fellow who might be more comfortable; and I can tell you, you'll be an awful fool, my dear boy, if you let her slip through your hands."

"Stuff!" cried Frank. "I wish you'd let a man eat his breakfast in peace, without all this rubbish. Archery fête, is it? I didn't know anybody went in for archery nowadays; and, as for croquet, I am sick of it. I don't think I shall go. What sort of a fellow is Montague? The best thing would be to run up to town, and have a talk with him at once."

"If that is what you have determined on," said Edgbaston; "but, Frank, if I were you, with such a chance——"

"Oh, confound the chance!" said Frank; and the rest of the

conversation was based on the idea that his heart was set on the proposed exchange, on the prospects of the 200th, and his own immediate banishment. He thought he had done it very cleverly, when at last he got rid of his comrade. But Edgbaston was not the man to be so easily deceived. He explained the whole matter confidentially to the first group of men he encountered. "Look here, you fellows," he said; "mind how you talk of little Rich to Frank Renton. He has made up his mind to go in for Nelly, and he's awfully thin-skinned about it, and sets up all sorts of pretences. Frank's the favourite, I always told you; I'll give you five to one they are married in six months."

Thus Frank's affairs were discussed, though he flattered himself he had so skilfully blinded his critic. When Edgbaston was gone, he drew the little note from beneath the other papers. It was from Nelly, as he thought, and there was not much in it,—but yet,—

"DEAR MR. RENTON,

"Mamma bids me say that she forgot, when you were here, to tell you of the little party to which the enclosed card is an invitation. They were all put up on Saturday, before you came, and we forgot them. And I open your envelope only lest you should think it strange that we never said anything about it. I hope you had a pleasant walk to Cookesley. The river must have been lovely.

"The fête is in my poor little honour, so I hope you will come. It happens to be my birthday;—not that anybody except my own people can be supposed to care for that; but you, who are so fond of your family, will excuse poor papa and mamma for making a fuss. You know I am the only girl they have; though I am only

"NELLY.

"Richmont, Monday morning."

Only,—Nelly! It was a tantalising, seductive little note, which tempted a young fellow to answer, even when he had nothing to say. She must have written it as soon as he was gone. She must have been thinking of him quite as much, at least, as he had been thinking of her. Something of the natural complacency and agreeable excitement which, even when there is nothing more serious in hand, moves a young man in his correspondence with a girl, breathed about Frank as he wrote his reply. He told her he could perfectly understand the fuss that would be made, and that it was astonishing how many follies other people, who could not claim such a tender right of relationship, might be tempted to do for the sake of a little personage who was only,—Nelly. And then he begged pardon on his knees for the familiarity. Thus it will be seen that things were making considerable progress in every way. This snatch of letter-writing did more for the sentimental side of the question than half-a-dozen interviews.

The pretty little note with Nelly's little cipher on it, the suggestions of the conclusion, the humility which asserted a subtle claim on his discrimination as a man fond of his own family,—all this moved Frank, who was not used to such clever little suggestive correspondences. For the first time it occurred to him that Nelly was a sweet little name, and that it would be pleasant to have its little owner rush to meet him when he went home. For one moment the hunters and the terriers fell into the background. Thus it will be seen that the affair made admirable progress in every possible way.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MRS. RENTON'S CALL.

AND it was not later than the Wednesday after when Mrs. Renton, moved to the pitch of heroism by the possible advantages to her boy, and fortified by a large cupful of arrowroot, with some sherry in it, got into her carriage and called at Richmond. Mary accompanied her, full of curiosity and opposition. Mary herself had thought Nelly Rich "nice" when she met her and had no particular call to be interested in her; but now her feelings were much less amiable. A little sprite of evil, tempting Frank to do what he ought not to do,—this was the idea which now entered Mary's mind as to her little neighbour. But, nevertheless, of course she accompanied her aunt merely to smile and say polite things to everybody. She could not help it; it was the duty which life exacted of a well-bred maiden. It was a very fine day, and both the ladies sallied forth with the hope, common to people who pay morning visits, of finding that the Riches were out, and that a card would serve all purposes of civility. "They are sure to be out such a beautiful day," said Mrs. Renton. "I hope you put some cards in my case, Mary; and write your name on one, my dear, that they may see we have both called. I should like to pay every attention, in case of anything——" Mary made a little wry face, but scribbled her name all the same, without any remark. But when they drew up before the door at Richmond their delusions were all scattered to the winds. Everybody was in,—Mr. Rich, Mrs. Rich, Miss Rich; and Mrs. Renton, not without an effort, got out of her carriage. She was much impressed by the beautiful footmen who stood about the hall. "Poor old Beecham!" she said in her niece's ear; "it never was kept up as it ought to be in their time,—poor things!" and her heart melted towards the people who had everything in such order. "It would be a lesson to Sargent to see that garden," she said; "only to see it. Oh, my dear, what money can do!" So went in, with her mind prepared to be friendly. Mrs. Rich received her in a considerable flutter. She was the first county lady of any importance who had done her so much honour. Finer people than Mrs. Renton, indeed, had come down from town

to the Riches' parties, and taken the good of all that was going, and laughed at the hosts for their pains; but no leader of the county had yet presented herself. Mrs. Renton was, as the maids say, "*passée*," but, nevertheless, her countenance was as good as any one's for a beginning. She might have withdrawn from the world, but so much the more was the world likely to be impressed by her example. It was the first ray of the sunshine of local grandeur in which it was the desire of Mrs. Rich's heart to bask.

"This is so kind,—so very kind," she said in her flutter. "You must let me send for my daughter. She is in her favourite room, with her pictures and her books; but she would not miss you for the world. This is the most comfortable corner, with no draughts. Some tea, Baker; and let Miss Rich know Mrs. Renton is here."

"Pray don't disturb yourself," Mrs. Renton said. "I scarcely ever go out; but it is such a lovely day."

"And so kind of you!" repeated the lady of the house. "I had heard so much of your family,—such nice young men, and everything so charming, that I confess I have been longing for you to call. And I have the pleasure of knowing two of your sons, Mrs. Renton,—Mr. Frank, and the one next to him,—Mr. Laurence, I think,—delightful young men. I hope Mr. Frank does not really mean to go to India. It would be such a loss to the neighbourhood. I was telling him he ought to marry an heiress, and settle down in the county, and make himself comfortable. I told him I should have you on my side. And such a good son as he seems to be,—so fond of you. He surely cannot mean to go away."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Renton, "I should be very thankful if any strong inducement fell in his way to keep him at home." And just at this moment Nelly came in, in a white gown, with her favourite scarlet ribbons. The dress was not of flimsy materials, but dead, solid white, relieved by the red; and there was a flush upon her dark, clear cheek, and unusual brilliancy in her eyes. Frank's mother stopped short with these words on her lips, and looked at Nelly. Was she the strong inducement? She was a little agitated, and the nervousness and excitement made her almost beautiful. Mary Westbury stared at her too, open-mouthed, thinking, after all, Frank might have other motives. Nelly came in with a touch of shyness, very unusual to her. The nearest female relations of one who, perhaps——. If she had been even more agitated than she was, it would have been natural enough.

"This is my daughter Nelly," said Mrs. Rich; "my only daughter. She can tell you more about it than I can. We are to have a little fête for her on Monday week,—archery and croquet, and that sort of thing, and a dance in the evening. It would give us all the greatest pleasure if Miss Westbury would come. Nelly, you must try and persuade Miss Westbury. Indeed, I assure you, I spoke to Mr.

Frank quite seriously," Mrs. Rich added, sinking into a confidential tone, as she changed her seat to one close to her much-prized visitor. "And he is so fond of you. I am sure he will not go if he can help it. How nice he is! and how popular among the gentlemen! We were delighted with the chance which kept him here all Sunday. Sunday in the country is such a nice domestic sort of day. There is nothing like it for making people acquainted with each other. I was so glad when I heard the hours pass and no sound of wheels. I think before he left us that he got really to feel that we were his friends."

"He was very grateful to you for your kindness, I am sure," said Mrs. Renton, who, though she could talk herself upon occasions, was fairly overflowed and carried away by this flowing current of speech.

"Oh, grateful,—no!" said Mrs. Rich; "that word would be quite misapplied. It is we who should be grateful to him,—a young man accustomed to the best society,—for putting up with a family party. And your other son, Mrs. Renton, is delightful too. We met him in town. He took us to a friend of his, Mr. Suffolk, the painter, where Mr. Rich bought a most lovely picture. I should ask you to go up to the music-room and look at it but for the stairs. It is a trial going up so many stairs. Yes, we have done a great deal to the house. It must be strange to you, coming to call at a house you once knew so well. But, as Mr. Rich says, it is not our fault. We gave a very good price for it; and, if we had not bought it, some one else would. My husband has laid out a great deal of money upon it. He has excellent taste, everybody says; and, of course, being well off, he does not need to consider every penny, as, unfortunately, so many excellent people have to do. You would be pleased if you saw the music-room,—quite a fine domestic chapel they tell us. We have hung Mr. Suffolk's picture there. If you are fond of pictures——"

"Oh, thanks! but I am not able to move about and look at things as I used to be," cried Mrs. Renton, in alarm.

"To be sure," said her anxious hostess; "I ought to have thought of that. You will take a cup of tea? It is so refreshing after a long drive. Your son is quite a painter, I know, and so is my daughter. I tell her I cannot tell where she has got it, for we neither of us could draw a line to save our lives, neither her father nor me."

Thus Mrs. Rich fluttered on, more fluent than ever, probably in consequence of her agitation. She was anxious to show herself at her best to her visitor, and the consequence was that Mrs. Renton went away sadly fatigued, and with a sensation of pity for Frank. "I never could get a word in," she said, indignantly, when she found herself safely ensconced once more in the corner of the carriage. "Mary, have you some eau-de-Cologne? I feel as if I were good for nothing but to go to sleep."

"Then go to sleep, dear godmamma," said Mary, soothingly; "don't mind me; I have plenty to think about, and I am sure you are tired. But Miss Rich is not so heavy as her mother," she added, conscientiously. Her heart compelled her to do justice to Nelly, but it was against the grain.

"I don't know much about Miss Rich," said Mrs. Renton, sighing in her fatigue. And she closed her eyes, lying back in her corner, and dozed, or appeared to doze. As for Mary, she had, as she said, a great deal to think about, and indulged herself accordingly, having perfect leisure. But Mary's thoughts had more of a sting in them than her aunt's. She was thinking somewhat bitterly of the difference between hope and reality. How hopeful, how promising had been all those young men, her cousins! She herself, feeling herself as a woman as old as the eldest, though she was in fact the same age as the youngest, had thought of them in the exalted way common to young women. Something better than usual, she had felt, must fall to their fate. And yet so soon, so suddenly, what a miserable end had come to her dreams! Ben, for whose express benefit some unimaginable creature had always been invented in Mary's thoughts, had allowed himself to be taken captive by the first beautiful face, unaccompanied by anything better. He had set a creature on the supremest pedestal who was not worthy to be his servant, Mary thought. He had been beguiled and taken in by mere beauty, —not beauty even in which there was any soul. And Frank was going to marry money! She did not know about Laurie. Perhaps had she been aware how far he had erred on the other side, and how his admiration for the soul and heart had led him away, she might have been still more horror-stricken. The difference between fact and expectation made her heart sink. Was this all that hope was good for? was this all that men were good for? to be deceived or to deceive; to fall victims to a little art and a pair of bright eyes; or to affect a love which they did not feel. Mary's heart sank within her, as she thought it all over. But her thoughts were interrupted by Mrs. Renton, who stirred uneasily every five minutes and said something to her.

"I never saw Beecham look the least like what it does now," Mrs. Renton murmured, and then closed her eyes again. "I wonder what they are really worth," she would say next, drowsily, with her eyes shut, "when they can afford to spend so much on setting the house to rights. But the woman is insupportable," Mrs. Renton added with much energy.

Thus they went home again over Cookesley bridge, and across the smiling country.

"I am sorry you did not speak to Miss Rich, godmamma," said Mary, as they approached the gate of the Manor; "she is very nice, and just as well bred as other people. I never could have told the

difference." A sentiment which, forced as it was from her by pure conscientiousness, made Mrs. Renton shake her head ;—

"Ah, my dear, I never could have been deceived," she said. "When I saw her sitting by you, I said to myself in a moment, how easy it is to see which is the gentlewoman! But she is not so bad as her mother,—I can understand that."

"She is not bad at all," said Mary; "and if that is really what is going to happen,—though I hope not with all my heart——"

"Why should you hope not?" Mrs. Renton cried, sitting bolt upright, and opening her eyes wide. "How unkind of you, Mary! Don't you see the poor boy may never have such a chance again? If we had her entirely in our own hands we might make a difference. I must speak to Frank to begin from the beginning, keeping her as much as possible away from her own family. I wonder what the father looks like? The family are so objectionable," said Mrs. Renton, seriously, "that such an arrangement would be indispensable,—at least, if he ever hoped to make his way in society. I don't think I ever was so tired of any call in my life."

"But her family may be fond of her," said Mary, "all the same."

"Fond of her, my dear!" cried Mrs. Renton with energy; "what does that matter? You would not have a young man like Frank give up the society of his equals on account of his wife's family. It would be absurd. Besides, it will be the very best thing he could do for her to bring her away from such an influence; nobody would ever visit her there."

"But, dear godmamma," said Mary, persisting with the unreasonableness of youth, "if that is the case, would it not be better for Frank to withdraw from it altogether? For nothing seems to be settled yet, and I think he might still withdraw."

Mrs. Renton gave a cry of horror and alarm. "I can't think where you have got such foolish notions," she said. "Why should he withdraw? I tell you I think it is very doubtful if he ever has such a chance again. Weak as I am, you see what an effort I have made to-day on his behalf. I am frightened by that woman, but I would do it again rather than anything should come in his way. I would actually do it again!" said the devoted mother; and after such an heroic decision what could any one say?

As for Mrs. Rich and her daughter, they were quite unconscious of the feelings which moved Mrs. Renton. When the carriage disappeared down the avenue Mrs. Rich drew Nelly to her, and gave her a soft, maternal kiss. "If you ever have anything to do with that old lady," she said, "you will not find her difficult to manage, my dear. I was thinking of that all the time she was here. 'My Nelly will turn you round her little finger,' I said to myself. She is not one of your hard, fine ladies, that are as easy to be moved as the living rock."

"I don't see that it matters to me," Nelly said, impatiently. "Mamma, I wish you would not go on thinking that every new person we meet——. It is quite ridiculous. Why should I have anything to do with her? And I don't think she would be easy to manage. She gave me a look as I came in, and lifted her eyebrows while you were speaking,——"

"She was as sweet as sugar to me," said Mrs. Rich, "and I hope I can see through people as fast as any one; and it is you who are ridiculous, my dear. As if you did not know as well as I do that Frank Renton does not come here without a reason. He is a young man who knows quite well what he is about; and, of course, it is he that has sent his mother. That Miss Westbury did not look half pleased, Nelly. I should not wonder if she wanted to keep her cousin for herself."

"Mamma, you are too bad; you are always saying things about people," said Nelly. "She may have all the Rentons in the world for me. What do I care for her cousin? And why cannot you let me alone as I am? I am much happier here than I should be anywhere else. I hate all those silly young men."

"Ah! my dear, I know what nonsense girls talk," said Mrs. Rich; "but I hope I know better than to pay any attention. I should be glad to keep you always at home, Nelly; but I am not a fool, and that can't be. And isn't it better to fix upon somebody that is nice, and will be fond of you, and will not take you away from us? That has always been my idea for you. I made up my mind from your cradle, Nelly, that I would choose some one for you. Many people in our position, as well off as your papa is, would want a title for their only daughter; but I want somebody to make you happy, my pet, and that will not be too grand, and take you away from your father and me."

"That you may be sure no man shall ever do," said Nelly, returning her mother's kiss.

If Mrs. Rich had but heard what the other mother was saying as she drove home,—"I will speak to Frank to keep her as much away from her own family as possible!" Or if she had been aware of the calculation in Frank's mind about the houses which were to be had in the county, and his decision in favour of Cookesley Lodge as being farther off from Richmond! Thus the two sets of people went on in their parallel lines, never coming within sight of each other. After all, it was poor Nelly for whom the question was most important. She went away across the park in her white gown, with her pretty waving ribbons, and a sketch-book under her arm, after this talk with her mother. Nelly had not attained the highest type of maidenly refinement. She had adopted something of that exalted code of manners which entitles a young princess to signify her preference. She was rich and petted, and set upon a pedestal, a kind of

little princess in her way; and she had perhaps permitted Frank to see that his attentions would be acceptable to her in a more distinct manner than is quite usual. She was even conscious that she had done so, but the consciousness did not disturb her much. Communing with herself vaguely as she sat down under a tree, and arranged her materials for sketching, Nelly came to some very sensible conclusions about the matter. Yes; she liked Frank; he was nice, and he was very suitable. Her eye had singled him out instinctively from the little crowd of Guardsmen the first time she had seen him. Perhaps he was not clever,—not so clever as could have been wished; but he was very good-looking, and he was nice. And then, perhaps, he was younger than she quite liked him to be; but Nelly told herself philosophically that you could not expect to have everything. Her own ideal had been different. He had been thirty at least, a man of experience, with a story and unknown depths in his life; and he had been a man of splendid intellect, and looked up to by everybody; and he had been dark, with wonderful eyes, and a face full of expression. Whereas Frank Renton was fair, with eyes just like other people's, very young, and not intellectual at all. But he was nice,—that was the point to which Nelly's reflections always came back. And he was a gentleman of a family very well known in Berks, and would please papa and mamma by settling near them. And Nelly in her heart secretly believed, though even in her thoughts she did not express it, that Frank, though he might please papa and mamma by settling down, would in the meantime please herself by taking her all over the world. His ideal of the hunters and the terriers was very different from her ideal, though the latter was quite as distinct in its way. No doubt a young couple moving about wherever they pleased, dancing through the world here and there, over mountains and valleys, stopping where they liked, rushing about wherever the spirit moved them,—would be a very different thing from the caravanserai progress through Italy contemplated by papa and mamma and all their dependants. This was Nelly's ideal, very clearly drawn, and most seductive to her mind. Two people can go anywhere;—a young woman need not mind where she goes, nor how she travels, so long as her husband is with her. Even Mrs. Severn had told her stories of the early wanderings of the poor, joyous young painter-pair, which had filled Nelly's heart with longing. To be sure he was no artist; but still his presence would throw everything open to his young wife, and make every kind of pleasant adventure possible. No longer would there be necessity for pausing to reflect,—Was this proper? was it correct to do so and so? "You may go anywhere with your husband," was a sentiment that Nelly had been in the way of hearing all her life.

Thus it will be seen that Nelly Rich was not so much to be pitied as Mary Westbury thought. This marriage,—if it came to a mar-

riage,—was an affair involving mingled motives on her part as well as Frank's. Yet, as she sat under the tree with her bright face shadowed by the leaves, and her white dress blazing in the sunshine, she might have been a little lady of romance, with the flowers all breathing fragrance around her, and above the tenderest blue of summer skies.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A STEP THE WRONG WAY.

WHEN Frank Renton had sent off his note to Nelly, accepting the invitation for the birthday fête, and adding such little compliments as have been recorded, a kind of sensation of having gone too far came over him. He had not yet by any means made up his mind finally, and he had no desire to commit himself. It seemed necessary, by way of holding the balance even, to take a step in the other direction. So he set about making very vigorous inquiries concerning the 200th, their destination, and the character of the officers, and all the other points of information most likely to be interesting. And the result of his inquiries was a resolution to go up to town and see Montague, who did not want to go to India. Edgbaston and the rest might laugh, but Frank said to himself that he was far from having made up his mind, and that it was very important for him to acquaint himself with all the circumstances. It was on a June day when he went up to town in pursuance of this resolution, hot enough to dissuade any man from business, and especially from business connected with India. "If it is like this in Pall Mall, what will it be in Calcutta?" Frank asked himself; but, nevertheless, he was not to be dissuaded. Montague, however, though certified on all sides to be at home, was not to be found. Frank sought him at his rooms, at one club after another, at the agent's,—everywhere he could think of,—but was unsuccessful. To be sure he got all the necessary information, which answered his purpose almost as well; but the ineffectual search tired him out. He was so thoroughly sick of it, and the day was so hot, that none of his usual haunts or occupations attracted him as it happened. After he had fortified himself with sherry and biscuits, he went rambling forth to spend his time in some misanthropical way till it should be time to return to Royalborough; but the best way that occurred to him for doing that, was to take a walk. The Row was deserted; so, of course, it would have been foolish to go there; and he did not feel disposed to make calls; and lounging about the club,—or, indeed, anywhere where he should meet men and be questioned on all hands about himself and his brothers,—was a trial he was not equal to in his present frame of mind. So he went out to walk, which was a curious expedient. And of all places in the world

to go to, turned his steps in the direction of the Regent's Park, which, as everybody knows, is close to Fitzroy Square.

I have never been able to understand what was Frank's motive in setting out upon this walk. He knew very well,—none better,—that it was entirely out of the world. What a Guardsman could have to do in such a neighbourhood, except, indeed, to visit a wayward brother, nobody could have imagined; and now the wayward brother was gone. He said to himself that he did not mind where he went, so long as it was quite out of the way of meeting anybody; and yet on ordinary occasions Frank had no objection to meeting people. He went up Harley Street, scowling at those scowling houses, and then he went into the smiling, plebeian park, among all the nursery-maids. How funny it was, he said to himself, to notice the difference between this and the other parks, and persuaded himself that he was studying life on its humdrum side. He looked into the steady little broughams meandering round and round the dull terraces. Was it any pleasure to the old ladies to drive about thus, each in her box? And then he walked down the centre walk, where all the children were playing. The children were just as pretty as as if they had been in Kensington Gardens. Mrs. Suffolk's babies trotted past, with signs of old Rich's two hundred and fifty pounds in their little summer garments, though Frank knew nothing of them,—and he kept stumbling over two pretty boys, who recalled to him some face he knew, and to whom he seemed an object of lively curiosity. They held close conversations, whispering with their heads together, and discussing him, as he could see, and turned up wherever he went, hanging about his path. "I tell you it ain't Laurie's ghost," one of them said audibly, at length. "He's twice as tall, and he's Laurie's brother." "Hallo!" Frank said, turning round upon them; "you are the little Severns, to be sure." No doubt it was the first time the idea had occurred to him. He must be close to Fitzroy Square, and being so, and Mrs. Severn having been such a friend of Laurie's, it was his duty to call. Clearly it was his duty to call. She was a friend of the Riches, too. There was thus a kind of connection on two sides; and to be near and not to call would be very uncivil. Frank made friends with the boys without any difficulty, and took the opportunity of making them perfectly happy by a purchase of canes and whips from a passing merchant of such commodities, and set off for the Square under their guidance. It would not have mattered if Mrs. Severn had not known that he was in the neighbourhood; but of course the boys would hasten home and tell. And to be uncivil to so great a friend of Laurie's was a sin Frank would not have been guilty of for the world. Thus it will be seen that it was in the simplest, most unpremeditated way that he was led to call at the Square.

The scene he saw when he went in was a scene of which Laurie had

once made a little drawing. Though it was so hot and blazing out of doors, the great window of Mrs. Severn's dining-room, which looked into her garden, was by this time of the afternoon, overshadowed by the projecting ends of her neighbours' houses, and admitted only a softened light. Alice sat full in the midst of this colourless day with her curls hanging about her shoulders, and her delicate face, with all its soft bright tints, like a flower a little bent upon its stem. The door of the dining-room was ajar; and this was how Frank managed to catch a passing glimpse as he was being ushered into the decorum of the great vacant drawing-room; for to be sure he was a stranger, and had no right to go as familiar visitors did, and tap at the padrona's studio-door. He saw as he passed Alice sitting by the window, her hands full of work, and her face full of contentment and sweet peace. And at her feet, like a rose-bud, sat little Edith, in all a child's carelessness of attitude, her little white frock tucked about her shapely, rosy limbs, her little feet crossed. Miss Hadley was in the shadow, and Frank did not see her. He thought Alice and her little sister were alone, and that he was in luck. He paused at the open door, though the maid led the way to the other. "May I come in?" he said. Perhaps the tone was too much like that in which he had asked permission to enter the music-room at Richmond. Alice gave a great start at the sound of his voice, and dropped her work on the floor. "Oh, Mr. Laurie's brother!" cried Edith, who was quite unembarrassed. And Frank felt himself charmed out of all reason by the little start and the flutter of the white work as it fell. "I feared you were still at Richmond," he said, "and that I should not see you." And so he went lightly in and found himself in Miss Hadley's presence, with her sternest countenance on, a face enough to have driven out of his wits the most enterprising cavalier in the world.

"It is Mr. Frank Renton," said Alice. "Miss Hadley, Mr. Renton's brother;" and Miss Hadley made him a curtsy, and looked him through and through with her sharp eyes, for which Frank was so entirely unprepared. The thought of finding Alice all by herself had been so charming to him, and he had brightened into such genuine exultation, that the way in which his face fell was amusing to see.

"Your mamma will be very glad to see Mr. Renton's brother, I am sure," said Miss Hadley. "Run, my dear, and tell her; and ask if he shall go to the studio, or if she will come here."

"Don't disturb Mrs. Severn, pray, for me," said the discomfited Frank. "I was in the neighbourhood, and by accident met the boys in the park. I could not be so near without calling; but pray don't disturb her for me."

"She is sure to want to see you," said Miss Hadley. "Have you heard from your brother? It was so very unexpected to us all his

going away. I hope it was not his health. But you young men think so little of travelling nowadays. Is it you who are going to India, Mr. Renton? Your brother used to talk a great deal of you."

"Yes, I think I am going to India," said Frank. Alice was standing putting her work aside before she went to tell her mother of Frank's presence; but at these words she turned half round with an involuntary movement,—he could see it was involuntary, almost unconscious,—and gave him a soft look of inquiry and grief. "Must you go away,—shall we never see you again?" said the eyes of Alice. The tears were ready to spring and the lips to quiver, and then she returned to the folding of her work, and blushed all over her pretty throat. And Frank saw it, and his heart swelled within him. To think she should care! Nelly disappeared out of his thoughts like the merest shadow,—indeed, Nelly had not been in his thoughts since he left Royalborough. "I have not quite made up my mind yet; but I fear I must go," he continued, answering her look. And Miss Hadley, always sharp, noticed at once the changed direction of his eyes.

"Run, my dear, and tell your mother," she said. "I will put your work away for you, and Edie may go and play with the boys. Run out into the garden, children. We cannot have you all making a noise when people are here."

"But I want to stay and talk to Mr. Laurie's brother," cried Edith. "I love Laurie; there is nobody so nice ever comes now. And Alice loves him too," said the little traitor, "and tells me such stories when she is putting me to bed, about Richmond."

"But, you silly child, it was Mr. Frank Renton who was at Richmond," said Miss Hadley. Upon which the child nodded her head a great many times, and repeated, "I know, I know."

"Your brother was such a favourite with them all," said Miss Hadley, apologetically, "they get confused to know which Mr. Renton it is. He is very nice. Is he just wandering about on the face of the earth, or has he settled down anywhere? I don't think Mrs. Severn has heard; and that is strange too."

"We don't know exactly what route he has taken," said Frank. "He is not much of a letter-writer. Of course my mother hears. And I don't think it is anything about his health. There is such pleasure to a fellow like Laurie, who never thinks of anything, in the mere fact of travelling about."

"I always thought he considered everybody before himself," said Miss Hadley.

"He never pays the slightest attention to his own affairs," said Frank, "which comes to very nearly the same thing; and yet he is the best fellow that ever was born."

Having thus exhausted the only subject which they had in common, he and Miss Hadley sat and gazed at each other for some time in

silence. The governess was very well aware that Laurie had not gone away for his health,—indeed, she had a shrewd suspicion what it was that had driven him away,—and she could not but look at Frank with watchful, suspicious eyes, feeling that there was something in his uncalled-for visit, in his embarrassment, and Alice's start and look of interest, more than met the eye. There might have been no harm in that, had he been staying at home. But a young man on the eve of starting for India! It would break her mother's heart, Miss Hadley said to herself; and though she was sometimes troublesome, and almost intrusive in her vigilance, the governess loved her friend with that intense affection of one woman to another,—generally of a lonely woman to one more fortunate than herself,—which is so seldom appreciated and so little understood, but which sometimes rises to the height of passion. Jane Hadley made herself disagreeable by times to the padrona, but would have been cut in pieces for her,—would have lain down to be trampled over,—could she have done any good by such an act to the being she held highest in the world. Therefore it immediately occurred to her that her first duty was to discourage and snub this new visitor. Going away to India, and yet trying to make himself agreeable in the eyes of Alice, was a sin of the deepest dye.

"You were going to change into another regiment, your brother said," remarked Miss Hadley. "When do you leave? I should think, on the whole, it would be pleasanter to change the monotony of your leisure for a more active life."

"It is not settled yet," said Frank. "But I suppose I'll go. Yes; it is rather monotonous doing garrison work at home."

"And what part of India are you going to?" Miss Hadley continued. Frank began to get irritated by the questions. Confound India! he did not want to think of it,—or, indeed, to trouble his mind with anything at that moment. He wanted Alice to come back again, to look at him, to speak to him, to play for him. He kept his eyes on the door, and felt that the place was empty till she came. Here it was he had seen her first. There, under the curtains in the doorway, she had stood lighting up the darkness with her face; there she had sat making the tea;—how clearly every little incident dwelt on his mind! As for Nelly Rich, he had not the slightest recollection where he saw her first, nor what the circumstances were. He was never restless for her return when she was out of the room; but at that moment he did not even pay Nelly Rich the compliment of contrasting his feelings in respect to her with his feelings to Alice Severn. He simply forgot her existence, and watched the door, and stammered what reply he could to the inquisitor who sat opposite to him,—like an old cat, as he said,—watching him with her keen eyes.

And when the door opened at last it was only Mrs. Severn who

came in. Frank absolutely changed colour, and grew pale and green with disappointment. Laurie had thought her a type of everything most perfect in woman; but to Frank she was a sober personage, comely and middle-aged, and Alice's mother, which indeed was her real appearance in the world. She came in with a gleam of interest in her eyes, and a little eagerness in her manner. She had not taken off her painting dress, but she had put aside her brushes and her palette, and sat down by him without any fuss about abandoning her work. With her intimates she worked on without intermission, but to strangers the padrona ignored the constant labour which filled her life.

"Have you brought us some news of your brother, Mr. Renton?" she said. "I shall be so glad to hear he is safely in Rome. He should not have gone so late in the year."

"No, I have no particular news," said Frank. "His going took us all by surprise. My mother has had two or three little notes, I believe. I was in the neighbourhood," he added in an explanatory, apologetic way, "and thought I would call."

"I am very glad to see you," said the padrona; "Laurie Renton's brother can never be but welcome here. I have known him so long,—since he was a boy," she added, with a little colour rising on her cheek, seeking in her turn to excuse the warmth with which she spoke; but the blush was for Jane Hadley quietly seated in the background seeing everything, and not for the unconscious Frank.

"Oh, thanks," said Frank. "Laurie was always speaking of you. I met Miss Severn the other day at Richmond. She might tell you perhaps. How she plays! I don't think I ever heard anything like it. It draws the heart out of one's breast."

"Ah, yes, Alice plays very well," said Mrs. Severn with placid complacency. "She is doing something for me in the studio. She is as clever with her needle as she is with her music," she added, calmly. Clever! and to compare her needlework with her music! This speech went a long way to prove that the padrona was a very ordinary commonplace personage in Frank's eyes. That, however, did not matter so much. What was a great deal more important was that Alice did not return.

"I hope she liked Richmond," he said; "they are kind people, and the country is lovely just now. You don't know Renton, Mrs. Severn? My mother I am sure would be charmed to see you, and Laurie must have told you of our woods. My mother is a great invalid. She has always been so as long as I can recollect, but she would be delighted to see you. I wish I could persuade you and Miss Severn to come down for a day; I could row you up from Cookesley," said Frank, eagerly. Alice came in just in time to hear these last words, and gazed at her mother with a longing look. She had not heard the previous part of the proposal, but to be rowed up

the river from Cookesley ! The words flushed her young imagination with every kind of delight.

"It is very tempting," Mrs. Severn said, "but I fear we must not think of it. Alice, you must go and make some music for Mr. Renton; he likes your playing. Are you in town only for the day?"

"Only for the day," said Frank; and then he paused and put on his suppliant look. "When I was here with Laurie I was allowed to stay to tea."

"And so you shall stay to tea, if you like it," said the padrona, laughing. And Alice gave him a momentary glance and a soft little smile of content. A paradisiacal sense of well-being and happiness glided over Frank he could not tell how. It was something quite new and strange to him. He had been happy most part of his life, —not being yet quite one-and-twenty, poor fellow!—happy for no particular reason,—because he was alive, because he was Frank Renton, because he had got something he wanted; but this was a totally different sort of happiness. It seemed to float him away from all mean and indifferent things; he was mounted up on a pinnacle from the heights of which he contemplated the rest of the world with a tender pity; he was enveloped in an atmosphere of blessedness. This intoxicating yet subduing delight seemed to him the natural air of the place in which he was. They must breathe it all day long these happy people; even the governess who sat grim over her knitting and watched him with keen eyes. It was the air of the place, though the place was Fitzroy Square, in the heart of London, on the way to the City; for never in the summer woods, never at home in his hereditary house, never amid the luxuries and delights of society had he breathed anything like it. He did his best to make himself agreeable to Mrs. Severn, but it cannot be asserted that he was sorry when she left the room, which she did after a while. True, Miss Hadley was there, more watchful than a dozen padronas; but the watchfulness seemed appropriate somehow and was harmonised by the atmosphere, just as summer air harmonises all out-door noises. The children rushed to the garden, getting tired of the quiet, and Alice went into the other room and began to play. I have said it was the only poetry of which Frank was susceptible. All the poets in one could not have moved him as these sweet inarticulate floods of sound did, making the atmosphere more heavenly still, breathing a heart into it full of soft longings and a tender languor. The house, as we have said, was on the shady side of the Square—the great drawing-room felt like some cool, still, excluded place, in the midst of the hot and lingering afternoon. Frank threw himself into a chair at the other end of the room, from whence he could watch the musician without disconcerting her. There were the three great windows draped in white like tall ghosts ranged against the wall; and the

chairs and tables all grouped in a mysterious way as if there were whispering spectators who marked all; and the cool grey-green walls with here and there the frame of a picture catching the light; and Alice in her fresh muslin gown, white, with lines and specks of blue, with blue ribbons tied among her curls, and her bright eyes intent and her white hands rippling among the ivory keys. The only thing that had ever made a painter of Frank was his meeting with Alice. His mind was becoming a kind of picture gallery hung with sketches of her. He remembered every look, almost every dress she had ever worn,—the dark neutral-tinted one that night, the white at Richmond, and now the glimmer of blue ribbons among the curls,—

After a time Miss Hadley, who sat there patient with her knitting, like a cat watching a mouse, was called away for something and had to leave them reluctantly. And then it is undeniable that Frank took advantage of her absence and stole a little closer to the piano. He even interrupted Alice ruthlessly in the midst of her sonata.

"Play me this," he said, humming the bars that haunted him. He was even so bold as to approach his hand to the piano and run over the notes. "It was the first thing I ever heard you play," the young man added; "I have done nothing but sing it ever since. Ah, forgive me for stopping you! Let me hear it again."

"It is very lovely," faltered Alice, stooping her head over the keys; and then by chance their eyes met and they knew—What? Neither said another word. Alice's fingers flew at the keys with the precipitancy of haste and fear. She spoiled the air, her heart beating so loud as to drown both tune and time. As the notes rushed out headlong after each other, an indifferent looker on would have concluded poor Alice to be a school-girl in the fullest musical sense of the word. But Frank, though he was a connoisseur, never found it out. He sat down behind her listening with a perfect imbecility of admiration. It might have been St. Cecilia, it might have been the angels playing in heaven whom Cecilia heard. To him it was a strain divine. To think that he had not known of Alice's existence when he heard these notes first! He began to babble in the midst of the music, quite unconscious of doing anything amiss.

"When I heard you play that first I had never seen you," he said, and though Alice was at the crisis of the melody her hands slackened and lightened to listen. "I could not think who it could be. I thought you must be the sick one of the family or something. And then, when your mother called you and you came and stood in the door——"

Alice now stopped altogether and did her best to laugh. "What a very good memory you must have," she said. "I am sure I could not have remembered all that."

"Yes; I have a good memory,—for some things," said Frank, while

she half unconsciously kept running on with one hand among the treble keys, half drowning his voice, half making an accompaniment to it. "Your mother spoke of you in such a tone—I understand it now, but it bewildered me at the time. I thought you must be ill—or—sickly—or something. And then she called Alice, and you appeared under the curtains; I can see it all as plain as if it had happened yesterday. Laurie chattering enough for six with his back turned, and you standing in the doorway like——"

Alice made a great crash on the piano and burst at once into a grand symphony. Instinct told her to play, and it was just as well she had done so, for one minute after Miss Hadley appeared with her perpetual knitting in her hand. She gave Frank a look when she perceived his change of position and herself approached the piano. A young fellow who was going to India! That was his sole and unique description to Miss Hadley,—and she was deeply indignant at his presumption. The symphony was a long one, but Alice was restored to herself. Safety had come in place of danger. She had not wanted Miss Hadley to return, and yet under shelter of Miss Hadley her faculties came back to her. There was a good deal of crash and execution in what she was now playing, and it suited her feelings. It was a kind of music which Frank would have scorned at from any other player, but oddly enough it chimed in with his feelings now. They were both tingling all over with soft emotion and that first excitement of early love, in which it is the man's object to say as much as he may under covert of commonplace observations, and the woman's to receive it as if it meant nothing and to escape from all appearance of comprehension. And yet if by chance they looked at each other both knew—not what they were aiming at certainly, but in some darkened vague degree that there was a meaning, and a very decided one underneath.

Then Mrs. Severn appeared again in her black silk gown, and the tea was set upon the table, and Alice made it as she had done before. It was like the same scene repeated, and yet it was not the same. Alice who had been to him but a fairy vision was now——What was she now? Frank made a sudden jump from that side of the question, and felt his cheeks flush and a delicious glow come over his heart. But, not to speak of Alice, he himself was no longer an accidental guest received for his brother's sake; but if not a friend at least an acquaintance received for his own. To Alice at least he was more than an acquaintance. "I have lived in the same house with Miss Severn, and I feel as if we were old friends," he said, and Alice with a soft blush and smile did not reject the claim. "How pretty it was at Richmond!" she said, with a soft, little sigh. And if it had not been for that dreadful old governess, who broke in, in the most abrupt way, with something about India! What was India to her? What had she to do with it? If a man wanted for

the moment to forget everything that was disagreeable, what business had Miss Hadley to interfere? Frank as nearly turned his back upon her when she made her second interpellation on the subject as good-breeding would allow. Was it her business? He was very wrath with the meddler, but very soft and benignant with every one else, talking to Edith,—to the child's immense delight,—as if she were grown up, and discussing games with the boys, and making himself very generally agreeable. He stayed long enough to watch the people beginning to arrive on their evening calls, and accepted all the circumstances of the house with the profoundest satisfaction and sense of fitness. But he could not find any more private opportunities of making known his recollections or his fancies to Alice, and went away at last when he had but time for his train, with a sense of intoxication and absorption in he knew not what golden dreams. India!—but soft—India, when a man came to think of it, might, for anything he knew, involve brighter possibilities than he had yet contemplated. Speak low; whisper low. When this thought occurred to Frank he ran and took his leave with a sensation as if a whole hive of bees had set to buzzing in his head. As I have said it intoxicated him. He had need to go away, to get himself into the morose solitude of the train to think it over. The sudden light that had burst upon his path took all power of vision from his dazzled eyes.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WAVERING.

It has been seen that Frank Renton was not, in any sense of the words, a model young man. He was not offensive nor disagreeable, but, as a pure matter of fact, the centre of his own world,—as, indeed, we all are more or less. When it had been placed so very clearly before him that it was to his advantage to marry money, he had acquiesced, with a little struggle, feeling that the advantage was so great as to create a duty; but now, after this bewildering day, another prospect altogether opened before his eyes. He had forgotten Nelly. For the moment she passed from his mind, as if she had never been, and Alice had risen upon him like the sun. He could perceive now that from the first moment his heart had claimed her. Happiness, companionship, the very light of life, seemed to be concentrated for him in that simple youthful creature, ignorant of the world, innocent as a child, sweet with the earliest freshness of existence. He had no need to reason about it, to say to himself that it was she whom he wanted, she whom he had unconsciously been groping for;—he knew it; it was clear as daylight; he seemed to himself to have been aware of it all along, from the earliest moment. A voice from heaven had spoken to him, as to Adam, crying, "This is she." Such was the thought that filled his mind as he went down to Royal-

borough in the dark and damp loneliness of the railway carriage. He had so much thinking to do that he had warned the guard that he must have a compartment to himself; and there he lay back in his corner with a very black shadow thrown on him from the dim lamp, and floated forth upon this Elysian sea of thought. But it was only for the first two minutes that it was Elysian. All at once he sat bolt upright, and remembered that he had forgotten something. Nelly! This recollection rushed at him like another railway train in the darkness, so that there was a sharp and violent collision. After the first shock Frank began to consider anxiously how far he had gone on that other side, what words he might have spoken, what inferences had been made. Only yesterday, it must be allowed, he was making very decided way towards Nelly. He had been softened, and brought nearer to her personally, and the house and the hunters had held a very high place in his thoughts. He had persuaded his mother to call, and written a note which was not at all unlike the first beginning of love-making. And yet, to-day, he had forgotten Nelly's existence. When he recollected all this, he grew suddenly very hot, and very uncomfortable. Love, even when it is unfortunate, has something sweet in it; but the thought of Nelly's little indignant face was not sweet. He had never loved her; he had never, even to himself, pretended to be fond of her. He had represented to himself that if they were married, no doubt the time would come when he should be fond of his wife. But while he was thus deciding in cold blood, the other had but to give a glance, and all was over with Nelly. When this terrible complication became apparent, Frank no longer found that there was anything Elysian in his circumstances; for this discovery suddenly revealed to him the entire circumstances of the case. Nelly was marriageable, for she was very rich; but Alice was poor. If the wealth of the one outbalanced the objections against her in respect to birth and breeding, there was no such saving clause in respect to the other. Even Mr. Rich patronised Mrs. Severn. The artist's family was of no rank, and had no social standing whatever, not even that conferred by money. As for the distinction of art,—Frank was too much a man of the world not to know for how little that counted. Penniless, without connections or prospects, or blood, or anything,—a creature who was only herself, and possessed only the qualities of her own mind and heart! To make such a marriage, Frank was aware, would be sheer madness. Nelly was different. Nelly meant Cookesley Lodge, with all its accompaniments, and a certain sum a year. Alice meant nothing but her simple self. No wonder the moisture stood heavy on his forehead. He had been a fool, in suffering himself to be thus moved out of all sense and prudence. And yet when he tried to turn to other thoughts his heart grew sick. He—almost—made a vow never to think of anybody, never to look at any one more. Why was fate always so spiteful? Why was it that Alice

had not Nelly's fortune, or Nelly Alice's charms? It was not that he was mercenary. Money, except for what it brought, was not important to Frank; but there is a difference between being mercenary and being an idiot. And he knew so well what the world would say if, instead of marrying money, he married a girl who had nothing,—neither money nor any other substantial recommendation. He would be laughed at, and she would be snubbed,—and who could wonder at it? Thus Frank reasoned with himself, and groaned in his heart. And then he thought of India, and the world stood still for a moment that he might look that possibility in the face.

India! In the first place, it was out of the world, and the ridicule attending his fiasco would not, in India, be so overwhelming; but, at the same time, the world is a very small place, and news would travel faster than by telegraph to everybody who was anybody. In India the pay was double, which was a very great matter; but then, on the other hand, would not the expenses be greater too? Not, of course, in proportion to Cookesley Lodge and the hunters, which, alas! it was no use thinking any more about, but in proportion to the tiny ménage which a young soldier with two hundred a year, besides his pay, might venture on at home. And here, once more, Frank drew himself suddenly up, with a sensation of misery. Two hundred a year and his pay barely sufficed for himself. To marry upon it would be simple madness, neither more nor less. And to wait seven years—No! India was the only chance. It was the most usual thing in the world for a young fellow going out there to marry before he went;—therefore it must be practicable. There would be no society nor expensive habits,—as he supposed, in his ignorance,—and there was the chance of appointments, which was always worth taking into account. Frank contemplated the question all round, but it was a very dreary horizon which encircled him on every side. Poverty, the renunciation of most things which had made life agreeable,—a struggle with care and the burdens of serious life,—instead of Cookesley and the hunters and terriers, and the country gentleman's existence, for which he had evidently been created! There was so much good in the young man, however, that though he could not but contrast the two existences which thus seemed to be set before him, he could not and did not contrast the two through whose hands their different threads must run. He made no comparison there. Nelly had been swept out of his sky the moment Alice appeared.

One thing was quite clear to him at this crisis of excitement and emotion, while the image of Alice still danced before his eyes with all her soft looks and words;—Cookesley and its delights,—meaning Nelly and her fortune,—were impossible,—quite impossible; altogether out of the question. He had been capable in the abstract of doing a duty to himself and the world, and securing,—in default of Laurie, for whom he always acknowledged the position would have

been so much more suitable,—all those advantages which seemed to be held out to him in Nelly Rich's hand. He liked her very well, and no doubt would have grown fond of her in time. That he could have done. His own interests, and the unanimous voice of his friends, and the appeal of the world in general, had all but decided the question. But Frank, notwithstanding the prudent and practical character of his understanding, was true and honest at bottom. And as soon as he discovered beyond question that he was in love with one woman, it became impossible for him to marry another, whatever the advantages might be which she brought with her. He was not capable of that. It was indispensable to him to be true, if not to Alice, who knew nothing about his sentiments, at least to Nelly. She had a right to it. He could have married her yesterday, but he could not deceive her to-day. What could he do? The clouds closed in upon him, swallowed him up, the more he thought it over. Do! Nothing but trudge forth to India, leaving his hopes of every description behind him,—a saddened and a solitary man. Neither one thing nor another, neither love nor wealth were practicable.

"I must never see her again," Frank said to himself, as he got out of the train; "I must never see her again!" Perhaps it was because of the very practicality and matter-of-fact character of his mind that he felt it dangerous to permit himself such an indulgence. He could not go and gaze and moon about her, as other men might, without anything coming of it. The only safeguard would be to keep away altogether. But it was not a cheerful thought; and, consequently, when he emerged from the station with his hat down over his brows, a certain air of tragedy and misery was about the poor fellow. And if the reader of this sober history should at any time encounter on the railway between London and Royalborough an unfortunate and melancholy Guardsman, well thrown back into the shadow of the lamp, gnawing his moustache as he chews the cud of fancy, let him remember the miserable perplexities of poor Frank Renton, and pity the man. The impulse of the mature spectator's mind is so invariably to vituperate the military butterfly, that it is the duty of the benevolent moralist to turn the tide of sympathy towards that beautiful, frivolous, yet sometimes suffering creature when he has the opportunity. After all, Guardsmen are men.

Frank kept his resolution for a week. He gave himself a fair trial. To describe the cogitations which passed through his mind during that time, would only weary the reader without bringing him any nearer to the issue of the conflict; for, to be sure, it does not matter so very much what conclusion a young man may arrive at in such a contest, after even weeks of thought. Five minutes may destroy the entire fabric at any time;—a sudden meeting,—three words,—all unpremeditated on either side,—a chance look,—even a few notes of music played unawares by strange hands,—will suffice to undo the

finest piece of reasoning ever put together. Nor is it at all unusual in Frank's circumstances for a young man to make an absolute determination against marriage one day, and go and lay himself at the feet of the lady of his affections on the next. Many times, it must be allowed, Cookesley Lodge would burst like a sudden revelation upon the young man's soul. He could hear the hunters rattling up the avenue, and the dogs yelping a chorus of welcome; and then this charming home-scene would give place to a misty conception of an Indian bungalow,—whatever that might be,—and the fierce delights of a jungle-hunt. The question was not Alice or Nelly,—that would have horrified him;—but Cookesley with all possible comforts and indulgences, and India with none;—question enough to make a man ponder. Four or five days after his visit to London, though it seemed four or five years from the multiplicity of his thoughts, he rode over to Richmond, on an unacknowledged mission to prove to himself whether that image of Alice, which he had been trying hard to banish, would disappear before the close realisation of all the good things on the other side. He had tried to forget her, or rather he had tried to shut her out from his thoughts; to divert his mind to anything else in the world rather than allow it to dwell upon her. And he was now going to test what success he had had. Nelly Rich was sketching under the trees, as we have before seen her, when he rode up to the door; and instead of going in to pay his respects to her mother, Frank,—with a strong sense of duty,—crossed the lawn to where the white figure, with sketching block on her lap, and bright ribbons fluttering about her, sat in the shadow of the soft limes. A prettier picture could not have been desired. The dead white of the dress blazed out in the sunshine, lying in crisp folds upon the soft grass. The silken lime-leaves made a flutter and chequer of light and shade upon the pretty drooping head. Nelly was older, more piquant, more expressive, indeed, to any unprejudiced eye more beautiful, than Alice Severn; not, as Frank said to himself hotly, that he ever had made such a profane comparison. But yet it was impossible thus to approach the one without thinking of the other. There was a technicality and a pretension, he thought, about all this paraphernalia of the artist. When Alice went softly to her piano, you never could have told, until you heard her, that she was anything but a school-girl. And no one seemed to give her any particular glory for her music. She was a little girl to all of them. Whereas Nelly was the mistress of everything, more mistress in the house than was her mother, and getting credit for all sorts of talent and cleverness. In his heart Frank took up a position of defence for the absent, whom, indeed, no one dreamt of attacking. No doubt he would have to talk of the sketch, and admire it as if it had been something very fine. At Fitzroy Square the mother had smiled and had just admitted that Alice played well;—

and that she was as clever at her needle as at her music. How strange was the difference !

"Is it you, Mr. Renton?" said Nelly; and she put down her sketching-block hastily as he approached. "I could not make you out till you came quite close. Did not you find mamma?"

"I confess I did not ask," said Frank; and the consciousness that he was paying a compliment which he did not mean embarrassed him in his peculiar circumstances; "I saw you here——" and then he stopped, the unfortunate youth, giving double meaning to his words.

Nelly blushed. It was very natural she should after such an address; and her change of colour told upon Frank as the most terrible reproach. "I thought Mrs. Rich would be with you," he added, hurriedly; "it is so pleasant out of doors on such a day. You were sketching, I am sure, and I have stopped your work."

"Oh, it does not matter," said Nelly. "I want to draw the house, and I cannot get it just as I want it. I must have in the window of the music-room. You know I live there. I don't care for all the rest of the house in comparison with that one room."

"Yes," said Frank, with a sudden relapse, "with such music as we had there the other day, the place was like paradise."

"You liked little Alice Severn's playing," said Nelly. "Ah! yes, I remember. She plays very well. For myself I am not fanatical about music. I don't understand it. I want to know what it says, and it says nothing. And these musical people are so exclusively musical, they never seem to have brains for anything else."

"But that could not be the case with—Miss Severn, I should think," said Frank, taking a foolish pleasure in speaking of her, and making a little pause before her name like a worshipper. Nelly gave him a quick glance, and answered carelessly.

"Oh, Alice! She is a good little thing enough; but I don't think she has much brains,—few girls have,—or men either for that matter. I don't expect anything of the kind from people who come to this house."

"You are not complimentary to your visitors," said Frank, feeling mortified, and with a secret sense that something at least of this condemnation was intended for himself.

"Well, Mr. Renton, few of our visitors are complimentary to us," said Nelly, with a flush on her face, which even Frank perceived was quite different from the soft blush which had greeted his first appearance. Probably her quick ear had caught some difference in his tone, though he was not himself aware of it. "We are rich, and you come to us when we ask you, and are very civil; but I know you laugh at us behind our backs, and make very free with our names, and do not show us the respect you would to the most miserable creature who was of good family. And then you think we are taken in by it, and don't know——"

"Miss Rich, you must allow me to say that personally you are doing me a great injustice," said Frank, colouring high. "I cannot undertake to be responsible for everybody who comes here; but so far as myself and my friends are concerned——"

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" cried Nelly, turning her face towards him with sudden shame and penitence which made it beautiful. Her large brilliant eyes were full of tears, and the eloquent blood had rushed to her cheeks. She held out her hands to him in the fervour of her compunction. "Oh, forgive me!—do forgive me! I was cross. I did not know what I was saying. I did not mean you."

There was nothing that Frank could do but take the pretty, soft, appealing hands, and hold them in his own for a moment. He did not kiss them, as no doubt he would have done had he never paid that visit to the Square. "There is nothing for me to forgive," he said in softened tones. And then Nelly recovered herself, and took her hands away.

"But you must forgive me," she said, "for being cross to you, who, I am sure, did not deserve it. Your mother called on Wednesday, and mamma was so pleased. You know we are new people,—very new people,—and it is a great thing for us to have Mrs. Renton calling. But because we are such spick-and-span new people we have always something happening to vex us. One hears bits of gossip about you officers,—how you laugh and discuss one, and take things in your head," said Nelly, breaking off suddenly, and looking full in Frank's face. What did she mean? Whatever it was, it covered him with embarrassment and shame. This conversation at least was true. He had been taking things in his head, and he did not know how to meet her look, or give her any reply.

"I don't know to what you refer," he faltered. "I am sure, Miss Rich——" and then he broke off altogether, so great was his confusion under the steady light of her keen eyes. "There is no doubt," he went on, as soon as he recovered himself, "that everything possible and impossible is talked about. It is the fashion everywhere nowadays. You know it as well as I. But had anything that was less than respectful ever been breathed in my presence——"

"I was quite sure of that," said Nelly, leaning towards him with glowing eyes and expressive face. The eyes were full of soft gratitude and something that looked like a tender pride. "I know that," she repeated; "you have always been so different!" The voice had fallen quite low, so that Frank had to lean forward to hear it. And there was encouragement in her look for anything he might have had to say, for anything he might have been moved to do in the excitement of the moment. And Frank's heart was softened by compunction and the sense that he was not so blameless as he had claimed to be. The crisis of his fate had come.

OUR RURAL LABOURERS.

IN a memorable passage in his "Democracy in America," De Tocqueville has pointed out that the true advantage of Democracy consists in the restless energy with which it inspires a Government. An intelligent despotism will surpass it in the constancy of its aims and in the perfection of its machinery; but the latter will, in the long run, achieve greater results, because it will develop the activity necessary to grapple with difficulties which personal government cannot encounter. We may reasonably hope that these observations, abundantly verified in America, will prove true in England now that a democratic element has been introduced into the Constitution, that the national conscience may be roused to the contemplation of national sins, and that, in consequence, social problems, which have long engaged the attention of the thoughtful patriot, may at length be pronounced ripe for solution by the practical statesman.

Among such problems the Condition of the Agricultural Labourer occupies a prominent position. For a long time past an uneasy feeling has prevailed that there was much in his circumstances demanding correction, much which was a scandal to a nation professing the desire to see all its members fitted for admission within the pale of the Constitution. One result of this feeling was the appointment, in 1867, of a Royal Commission, consisting of Mr. Hugh Seymour Trevelyan, and Mr. Edward Carleton Tufnell, to enquire into the extent to which the principles of the Factory Acts could be applied to the regulation of the employment of women and children in agriculture, especially with a view to the better education of the children. The Reports of the Commissioners, so far as England is concerned, have recently been presented, and, together with the Reports of the Assistant-Commissioners, they constitute an ample repertory of information as to the varied phases of rural life. The labourer's remuneration, his diet, his home, and his manner of life, have all been investigated as essential elements in the inquiry. We propose, in the present paper, to lay before our readers some of the more noticeable features of the peasant's condition, so far as we can gather them from the reports, and the voluminous evidence upon which they are based.

Commencing, then, with the labourer's remuneration we find that the wages of the ordinary labourer are subject to very considerable variation. The rule generally adopted seems to be to pay a small

money wage, which is eked out by perquisites. As the nature and amount of these perquisites differ in each county, and, in some counties, in each farm, it is by no means an easy thing accurately to ascertain the total earnings of a labourer. On the whole, they are lowest in the south and south-western counties, better in the midland and eastern parts of the country, and highest in the north, Northumberland being a rural Arcadia. A Dorsetshire labourer receives 8s. to 9s. a week wages, with a specified quantity of beer or cider, a piece of land for a potato crop, manured and ploughed by the farmer, and a cottage rent free. He is allowed to purchase "grist corn," or "tailing," for his own consumption, and provision for his pig, on easy terms. Reckoning these perquisites at a fair valuation, he earns, on an average, from 10s. to 11s. a week. But in Northumberland, and the northern counties generally, the earnings of the farm labourer rise to 15s. or 18s., while intermediate rates, varying from 12s. to 16s., prevail in the midland and eastern counties. These, it should be stated, are the rates for men permanently engaged; below them there is a large number of labourers, amounting, in some districts, to one-half the total number employed, who are not hired for "wet or dry," or who are not paid in sickness, and whose wages, therefore, are constantly at starvation point.

Regarding this system of a small money wage, supplemented by extra allowances, as it exists in Dorsetshire and the south of England generally, we not surprised to find that it works in an unsatisfactory manner. It affords ample scope to the action of individual caprice. In the hands of a penurious employer, the perquisites may be so managed as to afford but the smallest advantage to the labourer, may, indeed, be made an instrument of coercion. Thus, the potato ground is frequently rented of the farmer at a high, because a remunerative, rent, and the supply of grist corn is stopped altogether when the fixed price at which the labourer purchases it is less than its market value. In other cases, grist of an inferior kind is substituted, and, in consequence, the bread,—which, of course, forms the staple article of the labourer's diet,—is made of an immature corn, deficient in nutriment and wholesomeness. This corn, too, when bought, has to be ground, and the miller retains a portion of it in payment. Moreover, when the wages are paid fortnightly or monthly, as the case may be, deductions are made for the "tailing," for the food for the pig, and, in some instances, for fuel; so that the amount of money which actually changes hands is very small; so small that, as a rule, two days after the labourer has received his wages he has scarcely a penny left. A system more calculated to destroy his independence could hardly be devised. The allowance of beer or cider in lieu of an equivalent amount of wages is prolific of evils. The cider is of very inferior quality, and is, of course, consumed almost entirely by the man himself, his family deriving no benefit from it. A Somersetshire

labourer, for example, gets 9s. a week wages, and his cider is valued at 1s. to 1s. 6d.; that is, the husband spends from one-ninth to one-sixth of his weekly income in drink. It may be urged that he is thereby prevented from resorting to the beer-house; but against this view must be set the significant fact that the counties where this system most extensively prevails support, nevertheless, the largest proportion of beer and cider sellers. The fact is that master and men play into each others hands, the former disposes of the produce of his orchard, the latter consumes two hogsheads of cider annually, at a cost of 15 per cent. of his earnings; and his wife and children are just so much the poorer. Even in cases where the better class of farmers have endeavoured to substitute a money payment they have met with opposition from the labourers, who prefer the gratification of their own appetites to the comfort of their families.

Thus the labourer's income is inadequate in amount and improvident in arrangement. The consequence is that in the southern counties the food is sadly insufficient. The men regularly at work have to be content with a diet of bread, potatoes, and cheese. "We don't," says the wife of a Dorset shepherd in continuous employment, "have a bit of butcher's meat not for half a year; we live on potatoes, bread, and pig-meat, and are very thankful if we can get a bit of pig-meat; we often sit down to dry bread. For harvest dinner we have some boiled potatoes and a bit of cabbage, and we put a bit of fat to the potatoes." A family with three children at work, and "who have never had sixpence from the parish," "buy a little pig-meat, and use it with the potatoes, but we don't have a dish of pig by itself; at harvest we eat some cheese, but not at any other time." And this is in a country where "fuel is so scarce that the families, as a rule, never have a fire except at meal-times, even in the depth of winter." At Taunton Deane, the Assistant-Commissioner asked a little girl what she had for breakfast. "Bread and butter," was the reply. What for dinner? "Bread and butter." What for supper? "Bread and butter and cheese." This is a fair sample of what the Somersetshire labourer lives on, except that when he cannot afford butter or cheese, he dips his bread in cider, and his wife gives the children "tea-kettle broth," a concoction consisting of hot water flavoured with herbs and "tag ends" of bacon. Farther north, the wages are higher and the fuel cheaper. The Derbyshire labourer gets his six tons of coal in the year at 8s. a ton; while in Berkshire one ton only is given, and that valued at 25s. The diet of the Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Cheshire peasant, does not very much surpass that of his more southern comrade, but the cheapness of fuel makes a vast improvement in his general condition. Again, in Derbyshire, the labourer rents a small piece of land, and keeps his own cow, and his family is provided with an abundant supply of milk. There can be no doubt that the rate of infant mortality in Derbyshire has been

diminished to a remarkable extent through the operation of these "cow allotments." Indeed, the allotment system, when carried out with discretion,—the allotments being not larger than a quarter of an acre in extent, let at a low rental, and situate near the labourer's house,—is of unquestionable advantage. Labourers on those estates where the system prevails are generally conspicuous for temperance and thrift. Accordingly, Mr. Tremenheere recommends a great extension of allotments through the operation of the Inclosure Act.

It must not be forgotten that the specimens we have given above of the labourer's wage and food, are not those of drunkards, but of steady men, the bulk of whose earnings goes towards the support of their families. Even with such men, at least in Dorsetshire, the winter expenses almost universally exceed the winter income, and the extra earnings of next year's harvest are pledged. The very pig is mortgaged. When killed, some of it goes to the farmer to pay the expenses of fattening, and more goes to pay the bill at the village store. It is but seldom in the low-wage counties that the labourer can obtain more than a small portion of the pig for his own use. But when to the ordinary expenses of living is added the cost of excessive drinking, the condition of the labourer's family becomes deplorable indeed. On the whole, it appears that drunkenness is emphatically the labourer's curse. Improvement, undoubtedly, there has been; but throughout the evidence collected by the Assistant-Commissioners a cloud of witnesses testifies to the extent and gravity of the evil. The degradation of a district may be measured by the number of its beer-houses. Supplying the drinker, as a rule, with an unwholesome fluid, which provokes the thirst it promises to allay, they ruin him in mind, body, and estate. "Think," says the Rev. Mr. Melville, of Whitley, Worcestershire, "of a cheap, thin beverage, working effects mental and physical, of which its own washy and cheerless characteristics are typical. A sort of impotent fuddle of mind and character is the normal state of habitual cider-drinkers." The peasant's ability to work, too, is seriously diminished. In 1852, Mr. Bailey Denton had the control of some extensive drainage works in Dorsetshire. Impressed with the idea that labourers whose wages were from 7s. to 9s. a week, and who subsisted chiefly on bread, tobacco, and bad beer, could not possibly be equal to the severe labour he required, he imported some northern men, skilled in drainage, at 18s. a week, to afford an example for such local men as chose to dig by the piece in the trenches. Stimulated by the prospect of such remuneration, the latter applied themselves vigorously to their task, but were at first simply incapable of performing it. More beer and cider were consumed, but with the same result, until it gradually dawned on them that if they would do the northern man's work they must live on the northern man's fare,—good bread

and meat. The butcher's shop soon superseded the beer-house, and the Dorsetshire labourer eventually rivalled his teacher.

But, unfortunately, it is by no means an exaggeration to assert that drunkenness is in England a national vice, and the whole problem as to the regulation of beer-shops is therefore national in its character. The necessity for some solution of that problem is not confined to the agricultural community, and we would therefore content ourselves with mentioning that Mr. Culley, one of the Assistant-Commissioners, who saw in the counties he visited abundant proofs of the baneful results of the miserable habit, is in favour of the complete abolition of the ordinary beer-house licence "to be drunk on the premises." If that privilege were confined to houses possessing the spirit licence, and beer sold across the counter with as little restriction as bread and butter, the labourer, he argues, would purchase only so much beer as he required, and that he would share with his family.

And now, having attempted to show what the labourer earns and how he lives, let us inquire where he lives. What is the state of his house? On this point the Commissioners have collected a vast amount of evidence, and that evidence leaves no room for doubt that decent cottage accommodation is the crying want of the rural population. Shropshire, Dorsetshire, and Somersetshire, are the principal offenders, but from almost every other county there comes the same tale of miserable dwellings and over-crowded bed-rooms. True, in some neighbourhoods good landlords have wrought great improvements; but still the general condition of the labourer's home is such as to fill one with wonder and dismay. Turning over the evidence, we find many districts where the houses are unfit for human habitation. In this parish, there are eleven cottages with one bed-room each, and in five of these, families with three or more children are sleeping; in that, is a house with fourteen persons sleeping in one room. Here is a union comprising forty-two parishes, and three hundred and fourteen of the cottages in those parishes have but one bed-room each. It is a common thing for a bolster to be placed at the ends of the bed, so that all the family sleep in it with their feet to the centre. In this cottage, father, mother, and ten children, sleep in one room, divided by a screen, not carried entirely across, the room having only one small window; in that, one apartment contains father and mother, five sons, and two daughters, aged from two to thirteen, and an infant; in a third, there are crowded into one sleeping apartment, man and wife, four grown-up sons and daughters, and their little children. At one time the Commissioner enters a house where there is one bed-room for husband, wife, and seven children; at another, he finds similar accommodation for a similar number, with two illegitimate children. The walls of the latter, however, provided suitable ethical teaching for the inmates,—they were covered with

the pictorial masterpieces of the "Police News," a publication much in favour, it seems, in cottage homes. Such instances as these might be multiplied to almost any extent, but we content ourselves with one extract from the testimony of the Rev. E. Hammond, of Sundridge, Kent, who, touching upon the absence of any provision for the domestic comfort of the Kent farm-servant, depicts him returning home after a hard day's toil, to a room often destitute of light or fire; then "he goes to bed, in which, having first deposited his boots to prevent their freezing, he ensconces his person between a pair of sheets that defy all the colours of the rainbow for a hue that will match them. The stench of the chamber is intolerable, the men, stable and labour-stained, sleeping two in a bed." This was in a farm-house, and not in a labourer's cottage, it is true, but the reader's imagination will not fail to discern in the instances mentioned above, features even more repulsive than those to which Mr. Hammond refers.

Now it is not too much to say that the life of a child born and bred in such homes as these is tainted at its source. Accustomed from infancy to the entire neglect of habits of personal cleanliness, trained amid sights and sounds which are utterly destructive of purity, he can scarcely preserve his self-respect. And how can subsequent education contend effectually against the noxious atmosphere of a home where decency is constantly outraged? What are the chances of the most energetic teacher when pitted against the corrupting influences of a home

"Where, packed in one reeking chamber,
Man, maid, mother and little ones lay."

Indeed, the material condition of the cottage, with its miserable rooms, and its unmentionable makeshifts for sanitary arrangements, is but a type of the moral condition into which those who herd within are liable to sink. To say, with many of the witnesses on this subject, that "the better the cottage the better the man," is simply to restate the obvious truth that the training of home is the most potent of all the agencies which mould the character. Further, it is impossible not to associate the nature of this home-life with other evils incident to the rural population. What is the effect of field-work on girls and women is one of the questions which came prominently before the Commission. On a review of the whole case, the Commissioners have come, we think rightly, to the decision that legislative interference with female labour is unnecessary. But when one finds witness after witness reiterating that field-work destroys the delicacy of women, occasions loose and degrading conversation, and a general laxity of demeanour, one cannot but recall where the workers slept and how they lived. The recollections of their home could hardly be a safeguard of their virtue or a purifier of their

manners. Nor is it surprising to any one who realises the power of habit that this mode of existence induces a dislike of any other. Labourers, we are constantly told, do not appreciate good cottages. When a landlord has provided a dwelling with adequate sleeping accommodation, it is by no means rare to find one bedroom let to lodgers, another filled with potatoes, while the whole family swarms into the third.

The difficulties in the way of any general improvement of the labourer's home are considerable enough without being increased by the labourer's apathy. The fact is, that at the rates at which they are usually let, cottages cannot be built so as to make a remunerative return. Suppose a cottage to be let at 1s. a week, and that a return of 6 per cent. on the outlay is expected, the cost of building must not have exceeded £42; a price at which it is impossible to erect anything fit for human habitation. Lord Northbrook, speaking of Hampshire, says:—"The rent of 1s. or 1s. 6d. a week, which is the usual rent charged by the landowner or farmer, is quite unremunerative. . . The system is therefore an artificial one, and nominally lowers the rate of wages of those labourers who live in cottages let at an unremunerative rent." For example, if a labourer gets 10s. a week wages, and pays 1s. for a cottage, the productive rent of which is 3s., he really receives 12s. wages, and pays 3s. rent. Now, in almost all counties, there is a certain number of labourers who inhabit dwellings let by other persons than the landowner or farmer. For these, naturally enough, a larger, because a remunerative rent, is demanded. But the man who pays the higher rent obtains no more wages than his more fortunate fellow who lives in a lower-rented house, because the rate of wages is fixed by the farmer with reference to the low and unproductive rents of his own cottages.

The question of ownership is encompassed with difficulties. There are, it seems, three classes of labourers' dwellings,—those built by the landowner himself, which are generally good; those run up by speculators, simply to provide needed accommodation, and which are often deficient in due ventilation and adequate drainage; and those built by the labourers themselves of wattle and dab (mud) on some piece of waste land. The last, as might be expected, are emphatically the worst of all, having one bedroom and a sitting-room, and frequently no out-houses at all. If the landlord provides the cottages and lets them to the farmer, the latter, by sub-letting to his labourer, has at once complete power over him. At short notice, he can deprive him of his home; or can, at least, demand service which is not his due under threat of expulsion. "Under this power," remarks Lord Nelson, whose evidence exhibits lively sympathy with the labourer, "some prevent him from keeping a pig; while others claim the work of the women of the family, whether they consider it the truest economy or not." Much, however, may be said on the

other side of the question. The superior condition of the farm labourer of the north is attributable to the fact that in the northern counties there are attached to each farm, and placed near each homestead, cottages sufficient to accommodate as many labourers as the cultivation of the farm requires. Thus the farmer has his labourer always at hand, can, in consequence, provide with certainty for any sudden pressure of work, and feels a patriarchal interest in the little community of which he is the head. The labourer, on the other hand, is spared the fatigue of a long walk from his house to his field, and is bound to the farm by domestic ties.

Such, then, are the conditions of the problem. If a landowner is to make his cottages pay he must let them with the farm, but this he is unwilling to do for the sake of the labourer; if he does not build them the labourer is left to the tender mercies of a speculator, who charges a comparatively high rent for an indifferent dwelling. Frequently, too, the speculator is a local shopkeeper, who expects the tenant to deal with him at exorbitant per centages. Wealthy landowners may perhaps be content to dismiss all ideas of remuneration in the building of their cottages, and look for their reward simply to the amelioration of the condition of their labourers. Mr. Culley, indeed, tells us that on two very large estates where cottage improvement has been systematically carried on, the whole income of the property has been spent for many years past, and will probably, if the present owner lives, be spent for many years to come. But what can the poor life-tenant, whose estate is burdened, do towards providing decent dwellings for his labourers? Such aid as is supplied by the Legislature by means of such Acts as the 27 and 28 Vic., c. 114, under which the Inclosure Commissioners are authorised to advance loans for land improvement, is, in the case of cottages, practically useless. Money advanced by the Commission is repayable in twenty-five years, and on such terms that a dwelling costing £140 would involve the borrower in an annual rent-charge of about £10 for that period. But the cottage would be rented at about £3 18s. a year, so that there would be a positive loss to the owner of upwards of £6 a year for twenty-five years. Now a thoroughly well-built cottage, if kept in decent repair, will last for nearly a century, and it is not fair, therefore, that the cost of its construction should, as is practically the case under present arrangements, be restricted to one life. The Commissioners accordingly suggest that the duration of the rent-charge should be extended to at least forty years, and the owner for life be enabled to borrow for cottage-building as the owner in fee.

It is at this point that the problem of providing decent habitation for the labourer becomes intermingled with a question of no less magnitude than that of land tenure. The landowner cannot, in far too many cases, afford to be the land improver, because his life-interest is loaded with all manner of burdens. To quote the pithy words

of Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne, "So long as estates can be tied up for generations, loaded with settlements and so parchment-hampered that the proprietors are such far more in name than in fact, society at the same time expecting them to live up to the standard of their supposed proprietorship, it is clear that estate improvement is out of the question." Similar views are expressed by other witnesses,—by men whose character forbids the supposition that their opinions are the result of the application to this subject of preconceived theories or political crotchets. Both landowner and labourer are the victims of strict settlements, with their frightful array of entails and encumbrances. This system of settlements should, Mr. Tremeneere thinks, be kept within bounds, by giving to every one who succeeds to an encumbered estate the absolute power of selling as much of it as is required to pay off the encumbrances. Further, the adoption in England of such a system as that administered in Ireland by the Landed Estates Court, would cause a large amount of fresh capital to be spent on the land, and thus ensure the correction of the flagrant insufficiency of cottage accommodation.

Before we proceed to inquire what means can be proposed to remedy the evils under which the labouring classes suffer, let us for a moment turn to the northern counties. Here we find all the necessities and many of the comforts of life within the grasp of the labourer. The farm servants do not herd in miserable cottages, but live in their master's house; their food is plentiful and good, their habits are, on the whole, provident, their wages are high, their hiring is annual, and they have, in consequence, developed an independence of character which we seek for in vain amongst their southern fellows. What would a Dorsetshire labourer say to such food as this, the ordinary diet of a Cumberland farm-servant? For breakfast, porridge made with milk; at 10 a.m., a meal of bread and cheese, with beer or milk; dinner of beef or mutton, vegetables, and fruit puddings; at 4 p.m., tea and bread and butter; and later, a supper of porridge. Certainly the conditions of the farm-servant's existence are unfavourable to marriage, for marriage means a separate home and separate provisions; but, while admitting that this celibacy is an evil when carried to such an extreme as to limit unwisely the number of workers, it is comforting to find one spot in England where the labourer does not marry without regard to consequences. The northern peasant is not perfect, but he is mentally and physically a superior being to the Buckinghamshire labourer, whose wages are nearly as high. What, then, are the causes operating in his favour? Mr. Culley, himself a Northumberland landowner, mentions three,—that his hiring being annual, he is paid as regularly in sickness as in health, and has, therefore, no need of a club; that his earnings and those of his family all go into the family purse, and that he scarcely knows what a beer-shop means, his family resorting

to the milk-bowl, instead of himself to the beer-jug. But these causes are themselves effects, effects of the superior education of the northern labourer. He possesses that which enables him to resist the temptations so destructive to the southern peasant, and to insist upon sufficient wages and adequate food. His children attend school regularly, the public opinion of the northern counties being imperative on this score. The southern peasant, on the other hand, destitute of education, is unable either to recognise the evils under which he labours, or to suggest a cure for them. Earning a miserable pittance in Dorsetshire, he is too ignorant and apathetic to seek a fairer day's wage in Northumberland. Cumberland may invite more workers, he will prefer to increase the already redundant population of Somersetshire. His cottage will never be better till his improved habits and resolute self-respect demand a decent home. Yet, in his present state, he dislikes the model cottage, and prefers the miserable shanty with windows which will not open, and drains which will not act. His wages may be lowered in the most arbitrary manner, and his perquisites be subject to every whim of his employer, but he possesses neither the ability nor the energy to unite with his comrades in toil for more considerate treatment. His savings, if indeed his wages admit of any, are too often entrusted to a benefit society so managed as to benefit him very little, and the publican very much. Devoid of ambition, of that hope of bettering his prospects which is at the root of all middle-class enterprise, he loses his independence, and resorts to parish relief with humiliating frequency. For generations everything has been done for him, nothing by him, and, in consequence, he presents the barrier of indifference to every scheme for his reform. One misses, in his life, the self-reliance, the concerted action, of the artisan in large towns. True, one misses also, the restlessness and the strikes of the latter; but, better the noisy flow of the mountain stream than the lethargy of the stagnant pool. The turbulence of the one is the proof of its vitality; the repose of the other is the condition of its decay.

What, then, is the present state of education amongst the children of the rural population, and how can the deficiency, if any, best be supplied? Moreover, is the parent's income so scanty, that he is compelled to take advantage of every halfpenny which his child can earn, though at the cost of the complete neglect of that child's mental training, and is the work to which the child is put too hard for its years, or prejudicial in other respects? These are the questions which meet us on the very threshold of the subject; and on all of them the Commissioners throw much light. The education of the agricultural labourer is better than formerly, but is still miserably deficient. "Taking the lowest standard of a sufficient education for the labourer,—reading, writing, and some knowledge of elementary arithmetic,—I believe," says the Rev. Prebendary Perry, of Wad-

dington, Lincolnshire, "that more than one-half the population is growing up without it." Want of control and indifference on the part of the parents, infrequent and irregular attendance on the part of the children, a deficiency, in some counties, of good schools, and in others, of a public opinion in favour of education, are the main causes of this widespread ignorance. And the age at which children are withdrawn from what is often scarcely more than a nominal attendance at school, is unfortunately becoming lower. Mr. Fraser, the Inspector of Schools, shows that the school life of agricultural England is between three and ten, while that of Prussia is between five and fourteen. The difference between these limits, both in regard to the nature of the instruction afforded, and the influence of it in after life, will be readily seen by all who understand how mechanical a process the teaching of such very young children must necessarily be. Again, irregular attendance at, and early withdrawal from, school, are the consequences of the employment of the children in agricultural operations. The labourer's children are not only his offspring, but constitute part of his productive power, and work with him for the staff of life. Any legislative interference, therefore, with these young bread-winners, can only be justified on the ground that their work is too severe, too protracted, or is unhealthy. As a rule, children's employment, it appears, is not prejudicial to health. Farm labour is evidently a very different thing from factory work, with its accompaniment of crowded rooms, vitiated atmosphere, and injurious occupation. Yet, even in farm labour, the Commissioners mention two points on which the Legislature might fairly interfere. In some counties, boys of six or seven years of age, often ill-fed and ill-clad, are actually entrusted with the charge of horses, and have to tramp for twelve or fourteen hours a day, often over heavy land. No wonder that in such cases, they lose much of their vital force, their "labour-pluck," as one witness calls it, and grow up into stooping, withered, and knock-kneed men. In many districts, moreover, we find boys whose whole life, Sundays included, is spent in the fields scaring birds, till their mental faculties become powerless through disuse, and the child develops into a rude, untutored lout. In the former case, Mr. Tremenhoe suggests that boys under eleven should not be allowed to go out with horses; in the latter, that the boys should rest every alternate Sunday. These modifications would, so far as we can gather from the evidence, be supported by the common-sense of the great bulk of the farmers and men.

And this brings us to the crucial question whether it would be possible to ensure regular attendance at school, by fixing a limit below which the employment of children should be illegal. In order to answer this question we must first ascertain the value to the parent of his children's earnings, and this is a task of considerable difficulty. On the one hand, clergymen, landowners, chambers of agriculture,

boards of guardians, concur in the opinion that children should not be permitted to work below the age of ten, and that the labourer would not suffer materially by the prohibition. Many of the labourers, too, hold the same view. Henry White, a labourer at Starston, who earns 12s. a week, and has had twelve children, is "sure there is no profit in a boy's earning 1s. 6d. a week; it does not pay for the clothes he tears." Elizabeth Green, whose husband earns 13s. a week, and who has had twelve children, "has kept the boys at school till they were ten, eleven, and twelve. Children that go to work wear out more shoes and clothes, and they eat a lot more food, and there isn't much gain in their earnings." Sarah Roe, eleven years old, "went out stone-picking with mother at eight years old, earned 6s., and wore out a pair of new boots in the time, which cost 6s. 6d." But, on the other hand, instances are not wanting where the earnings of the children do form a very substantial addition to the family purse. It must not be forgotten that these sums, however small, generally find their way to the mother's pocket, and are not diverted to a drunken father. Even where the work is unprofitable, the mother often finds that "hunger is worse." In some parts of Lincolnshire, where the farms are large and the population scanty, the farm could hardly be tilled but for the help given by children in stone-picking, and other easy duties. And in the case of small freeholders, many of whom are scattered about the fen country, and parts of Durham and Yorkshire, and whose condition is hardly above that of a labourer, so important a share of the farm work falls to the lot of the occupier's family, that any interference with children's labour would probably necessitate some compensation.

On the whole, the evidence on this subject is so conflicting that we are not surprised to find that the Commissioners have arrived at diametrically opposite conclusions, and have, in consequence, presented separate reports. They agree in dismissing the Half Time System,—by which work and schooling are alternated,—as entirely inapplicable to the varied and uncertain nature of agricultural labour. Discussing Canon Norris's plan, that no boys or girls should be hired for farm service under fifteen years of age, unless they could produce certificates showing that they had passed in the fourth standard of the Revised Code,* the Commissioners concur in regarding it as unsuited to the ordinary level of agricultural remuneration, and as practically unworkable. Mr. Tufnell then recommends that all children, whether factory or agricultural, should be prohibited from working under the age of nine, except during ten weeks of school holidays, and that in two years after the passing of the Act the prohibition should be advanced to the age of ten. Mr. Tremenhoe, however, does not

* Standard IV. Reading: A short paragraph from an advanced reading book used in the school. Writing: A small sentence slowly dictated once from the same book. Arithmetic: A sum in compound rules (money).

see his way to recommend the entire prohibition of children's labour under any age, and makes, therefore, the following suggestion:— That every child employed in agriculture for twelve weeks in any twelve months should be obliged to complete 160 school attendances in each year till it attains the age of twelve; the obligatory school attendances to be reduced to sixty for any child of nine years who passes an examination in the fourth standard, and cease altogether for any child who at the age of eleven passes in the fifth standard.* Up to the passing of the fourth standard the parent is to be held responsible for the school attendance, and the certificates of passing to be given by a certificated schoolmaster in the absence of the Inspector. Both Mr. Tufnell's and Mr. Tremenheere's plans are dependent on the establishment of a general system of education.

Now, it is an obvious remark that non-attendance at work does not necessarily imply attendance at school. Mr. Tufnell would compel the former, how would he provide for the latter? Compulsory education is simply an injustice until good schools have been universally established, and the latter are the offspring of a general system of education. Given this general system of education, and Mr. Tufnell thinks that the prohibition as to work would stimulate the erection of schools. The existence of these would, in time, engender a healthy public opinion, which would surely overcome the apathy of parents and so accomplish the education of the children without compulsory legislation. Thus Mr. Tufnell trusts to the attractiveness of the schools, and to the action of public opinion, to ensure the child's attendance;—Mr. Tremenheere would compel it by law. The simple question is whether Mr. Tremenheere's enforced attendances at school would be considered less of an hardship than Mr. Tufnell's compulsory absence from work, and be, at the same time, effective as an educational agent. On the former point, the reply must be, we think, in the affirmative; as to the latter, it must not be forgotten that the educational clauses of the Print Works Act established a scheme, resembling in its main principles that of Mr. Tremenheere which is pronounced to be practically inoperative. While fully alive to the difficulties of the case, we cannot but think that when once a national system of education has been organised, public sympathy will so far support it that some such plan as that of Mr. Tremenheere may be strictly enforced without violating the labourer's feelings, or lessening his scanty means. It is satisfactory to know that any legislation for the instruction of the labourer will be aided by the vigilance of many, and sustained by the good wishes of more, even of the farmers and labourers themselves. In some places, indeed, the old cry against

* Standard V. Reading a few lines of poetry from a reading book used in the first class of the school. Writing: A sentence slowly dictated once from the same book. Arithmetic: A sum in compound rules (common weights and measures).

education, because it tends to remove surplus population, and so to raise wages, is still heard; but, as Mr. Tufnell remarks, "these are the very reasons which should induce the State to insist on it." Is it a vain hope that the time will soon arrive when the master who would keep his man, or the mistress her maid, in a state of perpetual ignorance rather than pay a fairer wage, will be known but as the fossil relics of a buried stratum of selfishness and injustice?

It is not probable that there are many such amongst the readers of "Saint Pauls;" but, if there be, we commend to their perusal Mr. Tufnell's description of the effects produced by education in the Scilly Islands,—demonstrating, as it does, the utter futility of any attempts to improve permanently the condition of the poor, except through the cultivation among them of habits of providence and self-reliance. Forty years ago the inhabitants of those Islands had sunk into a state of squalor and wretchedness rarely seen; they were, in fact, in danger of absolute starvation. In this emergency Relief Committees were organised, work was provided for the poor, and markets guaranteed for their manufactures, £20,000 was spent in charity, and, in fact, all the popular remedies for pauperism were resorted to. The result was complete failure. In 1834 the Islands were leased to Mr. Augustus Smith, who commenced at once vigorous measures of reform. Finding the cottier system in vogue, he consolidated the small holdings, permitted one only of each family to take the farm, leaving the younger children to betake themselves to other employments. At the same time, schools, ably administered, and duly inspected, were opened in each island, and the attendance of children enforced. All relief, whether in the shape of doles or over-paid labour, was gradually withdrawn, and the boys, once educated, left to shift for themselves. In ten years the Islands were completely transformed. Chronic misery had absolutely ceased; drunkenness, formerly the bane of the Islands, was almost unknown, and the pauperism was lower than in any parish in England. The superfluous population had been diminished, for the boys, well-trained in elementary knowledge, had found a seafaring life more profitable than agricultural work in the Islands; the shipping in the port had increased tenfold, and the attire of the islanders, and the state of their homes, indicated comfort and even refinement.

We cannot take leave of this Report without bearing testimony,—a testimony based on a minute examination of the evidence,—to the admirable manner in which the Commissioners and Assistant-Commissioners have performed their duties. We cordially endorse the opinion of the Commissioners that "a picture of the condition of the rural life in England, so exact, so impartial, and so valuable, has never before been presented for the consideration of Parliament as that afforded by the Reports of the Assistant-Commissioners."

THE JACKDAW AUTHOR.

THERE is a class of writers whose works are valueless till they are old, and then become of great value. There is also cheese, which is good for nothing when new; and wine which is undrinkable till its precious qualities shall have been evoked by time; and there are men who do more harm than good in the world, and give those round about them more pain than pleasure, till age and experience have ripened and mellowed them. But in all these cases there must have been a basis of valuable qualities from the first, which only needed maturing to fit them for service; whereas, in the case of the books referred to, no such merit can be predicated of them. They were absolutely good for nothing when written; were generally deemed to be good for nothing by the contemporaries of their authors, would be yet more emphatically judged to be worthless if they were produced at the present day; and which have acquired, by virtue of the lucky chance which has preserved them, a very real and very universally recognised value. It may furthermore be remarked, as a curious circumstance connected with this class of literature, that if the minds which produced it had been of a calibre capable of doing better work, the books left by them to us would have been incomparably less valuable.

These authors are the diarists, the keepers of journals, the small-beer chroniclers, who do not aspire to record a nation's history, but who are entitled to put "*quorum pars magni fui!*" as an epigraph to their labours. And of this class the writer of whom we are about to speak was a very notable specimen.

The works produced by such writers may be appropriately said to belong to the Jackdaw school of literature. It may be urged, perhaps, that the ant would be a more fitting armorial bearing for the family. For it may be accurately said of each of them, "*trahit quodcumque potest, atque addit acervo!*" The Jackdaw, however, is probably the fitter symbol of the tribe. For a certain spice of the furtive tendency contributes admirably to the characterising of it. Always awake, always on the watch, always with pricked ears, it is the habit and the business of your diarist, or your maker of "*historiettes*," to pounce on unconsidered trifles, and carry them off secretly to his hiding-place among masses of accumulated manuscript. Nothing comes amiss to him. But specially he seems to prize such waifs and strays as others do not think worth preserving;—odds and ends, which the people about him amuse themselves with for a

moment, but which no human being but he dreams of storing up and hoarding.

It is true, your Jackdaw is an idle bird ; and in this view the "*magni formica laboris*" would seem the more correct emblem of the tribe. For the model anecdotist, or historiette-preserver, must be an idler of unwearied industry. It is essential that he should have nothing on earth to do,—nothing, that is, of the sort of things that other men look on as duties or tasks of bread-winning industries ; and yet that he should have a decided turn for diligence. "*Strenua nos exercet inertia!*" might be their adopted motto. The model diarist must never go home to his bed from banquet, ball, or boudoir too tired to take his ever-ready pen at once in hand. There must be no deferring the business of his life till the next morning. If he does not book the trashy nothings, of which his shallow mind is full, while the feeble impression they have made is yet fresh, the froth on the top of them will have subsided before the morrow. And it is that froth which will give the flavour to his liquor when it shall be uncorked after a couple of hundred years.

Your model diarist must furthermore belong to the class of men who are universally reckoned as "good fellows ;" but he should be a specimen of that variety of the class to which the term is somewhat contemptuously applied. He must have no evil qualities of mind, heart, or manners, so prominently developed as to make any man or woman shun him ; nor any good or great qualities so strongly marked as to make even the poorest-minded, the loosest liver, or the most frivolous afraid of him. He must be the acquaintance of every man, and the dear friend of none. He must be universally liked and trusted by the women, but not given to indulge in "*grandes passions*" with regard to any of them. He must be considered the safest of men, and a model of discretion while he lives ; and only be discovered to have been the very reverse of this when he has been long since dead.

It is very desirable that he should be no strong partisan of any faction in Church or State. He should, on the contrary, be one of those light and easy-going skimmers of the social seas, which float in all waters deep or shallow, and are deemed to be sufficiently insignificant to be welcomed by men of parties and natures so opposed as never to associate with each other. His curiosity and turn for observation should be sufficiently strong to make him ready at all times to act on the "*nihil humanum a me alienum*" principle ; and yet it is good that he should be imbued with a sufficient spice of the tuft-hunting spirit to make him an assiduous frequenter of the houses of the great, and not above having an eye and ear for the servants' hall as well as for the reception-rooms.

Thus fitted for his task, the heaper up of "historiettes" will hardly fail to pile together a work which no human being will dream of

bestowing paper and print on for many a year, and which indeed will probably run great risks of being consigned to the waste-paper dealer as soon as the breath is out of the writer's body; but which, if it happily escape those dangers, and get once comfortably covered with dust in some library or garret, will one day emerge and make its author's name a household word among men.

It is specially of late years,—within the last thirty or forty years or so,—that the true value of such writings has been fully appreciated. The use of them has been discovered only since men have learned to expect that history should be presented to them, not under the guise of a dry and fleshless skeleton, but in that of a recognisable figure, reclothed with flesh, and coloured with the hues of life. The old histories resembled the old maps; in which there were wide blank spaces inscribed with a brief notice to the effect that “impassable deserts” filled all that portion of the earth. Huge tracts of social life, swarming with inhabitants, and containing the sources of those big facts which the historian did record, just as the so-styled deserts contained the sources of the streams which the geographers marked when they had grown big, and came near the sea, were all left vacant. But modern curiosity and modern science will not tolerate these vast blanks. And it is not only that we have discovered the value of the due filling up of such blanks, and the true historical importance of knowing how the masses of undistinguished men and women lived, and eat and drank, and bought and sold, and talked and amused themselves; but we have come to recognise that even the biggest figures, which History even on her tallest stilts has preserved for us, are very imperfectly known or understood, when presented to us like isolated sticks of timber, instead of like trees in the midst of the forest they over-topped, and surrounded by the underwood out of which they sprung.

Eager, accordingly, has been the hunt of late years among the dust of great libraries, and muniment rooms, and old family depositories, for the forgotten writings of the jackdaw authors of past days. And the result has been very considerable. For the most part, these materials for history have been discovered in large masses. As nothing came amiss to the jackdaw author, his hoards naturally grew to be voluminous. In most European countries it has been found that this disinterring of the jackdaw hoards has to a greater or lesser degree necessitated the re-writing of history; and historians have not been slow to gird up their loins to the new task. England and France especially have been busy at this work; and in the latter country it has been more particularly the seventeenth century which has as yet profited by the new discoveries. It is fortunate that it should have been so. For of all French history that of the seventeenth century is the most deeply and largely interesting to mankind, inasmuch as then the life was being lived, and the causes being

moulded, which produced the great cataclysm that, at the close of the eighteenth century changed the face and the prospects of the civilised world, and made it such as it was. Nor is there a volume of all the vast number of volumes of the class, which has been characterised in the preceding pages, that does not do much towards making the reader feel that he better understands how and why the Revolution must have come, and how, when it did come, it was such as we know it to have been.

In the list of the jackdaws of the pen, Tallemant des Reaux holds a very high, if not the highest place; and if the reader has in any degree interested himself with French historical inquiry and criticism during the last thirty or forty years, he cannot have avoided meeting with very frequent reference to his pages. Just about two centuries ago, the name of Gedeon Tallemant des Reaux was very frequently heard in all sorts of places in Paris, where men did congregate. Then for several generations it was so totally unheard of that not even the biographical dictionaries remembered it! Now once more it has become so much a household word, that an English reader can scarcely have failed to have often heard of him. Yet the man himself, and the nine volumes of his "*Historiettes*," as he has chosen to call them, have hardly been ever so presented to the English public as to make the present attempt to introduce him and them to our readers needless or unwelcome.

Gedeon Tallemant des Reaux was born at La Rochelle on the 7th of November, 1619. His great grandfather, François Tallemant des Reaux, migrated to that town from Tournay in the Low Countries, in order to escape from the persecution to which his profession of the Protestant faith then exposed him. His operations as a merchant prospered in his new home; and he became there a town-councillor and adjoint of the mayor. His two sons, Gedeon and Pierre, carried the rising fortunes of the family to a yet higher point. Associating with them their brother-in-law, Paul Yvon, they established a banking business at Bourdeaux. Here also the Huguenot family prospered exceedingly, so much so that Gedeon, the elder brother, purchased an appointment of secretary to the king,—Louis XIII.,—became the farmer of sundry taxes, and was appointed "*Tresorier de l'Epargne*" for Navarre. He died in 1634, leaving behind him a very considerable fortune. This Gedeon was not the grandfather, but the great uncle of Gedeon, the jackdaw author, who alone has caused the family name ever to be mentioned in the nineteenth century. Pierre, the younger son, was the author's grandfather. He must also have been a wealthy man, but his career seems to have been a less brilliant one than that of his elder brother. This elder brother, the senior partner in the Bordeaux bank, the farmer of taxes, and secretary by purchase to the king, left a fortune to his son Gedeon, the second, which enabled him to soar yet higher in the empyrean of financial

greatness,—and as a first step he purchased an appointment as Counsellor in the Parliament of Paris.

This shameful practice of selling appointments to offices of profit and dignity prevailed in France from the time of Louis XII. to within about twenty years before the Revolution. It was a culminating monstrosity of bad government reached by France alone among the Governments of Europe; and suffices to stamp the old Bourbon and Valois Government of France as the worst of all the oppressive tyrannies under which Europe groaned for so many centuries. It is true that the shame was in some degree shared by the Papal Court; for it would be strange, indeed, if any abuse ever invented had not found a congenial home there. But even at Rome the evil was not so great and so shameless as at the Court of France. Offices of state and dignities were sold in vast numbers by the Pontiffs. But Frenchmen alone permitted their lives, and honours, and fortunes to lie at the mercy of judges who had bought the right of judging them! Under Louis XII. appointments in the department of finance only were made saleable. Though bad enough, the evil was infinitely less than when under Francis I. the administration of justice was entrusted to men whose sole title to their appointments consisted in having purchased them! Of course once introduced and tolerated, the evil continued to assume larger and larger proportions under every successive reign. Under Mazarin a scheme was invented by virtue of which the holders of all these offices were required to pay a heavy sum every ninth year, in consideration of which the offices were secured to their families in perpetuity. This payment was called the "Paulette." The numbers of these offices, created solely for sale, were multiplied to a perfectly extraordinary degree under Louis XIV. And the titles of many of the bodies of officers,—for they were created in large batches,—thus brought into existence, are absurdly grotesque. There were "Inspectors of Liquors," "Inspectors of Butchers," "Inspectors of Pigs," "Stackers of Wood," "Measurers of Charcoal," "Measurers of Cloth," "Controllers of Fresh Butter," "Tasters of Salt Butter," "Inspectors of Wigs," "Controllers of Poultry," and a vast number more. The Chancellor Pontchartrain, who was one of the most prolific inventors in this sort, said that "it seemed as if Providence had an especial care for France; for scarcely has the king created a new appointment, before God creates on the spot a fool to purchase it!" Nevertheless, the vanity of a fool was not the only motive that produced purchasers for all these places. The tenure of them exempted the holder from the tax called the "taille;" and as the payment of this was held to be in some sort infamous, as it fell only upon people of peasant race, it was thought a very desirable thing to be freed from liability to it. Besides, many of the "charges" brought in large gains.

Gedeon the second, son of the Bordeaux banker, became a pur-

chaser of dignities on a larger scale than his father. As we have seen, he bought a place of Counsellor of the Parliament of Paris, and was installed in it on the 10th of June, 1637. And shortly afterwards he married. The richest men in France at that day were the "Intendants" of finance. One of these, Puget de Montauron, was noted as a man of immense wealth. He had an only daughter, Marie de Montauron. But she was illegitimate. And the highly respectable Huguenot family of the Tallemants were extremely averse to one of their race marrying a girl so disgraced. The Montaurons, on the other hand, would not ally themselves with a Huguenot. But the double difficulty did not avail as any barrier between the new Counsellor of Parliament and the fortune of the Intendant's daughter. Gedeon lost no time in conforming to the orthodox faith; and less in laughing to scorn the scruples of his provincial relatives. He was married to Marie de Montauron, and employed a portion of her dower in purchasing the place of "Maitre des Requêtes." Thus the career of the most brilliant and lucrative offices was open to him; and he obtained first the "Intendance" of Orleans, and subsequently, in 1653, that of Guienne.

Gedeon Tallemant was now safe to become one of the richest men in France. He did become so very speedily. But Gedeon the Catholic, grandson of the prudent old Huguenot La Rochelle trader, was one of those men whom no amount of wealth can prevent from ruining themselves. His dissipation was boundless, and of every sort. Perhaps among the least ruinous of his modes of spending money was the gratification of an ambition, at that time much the mode in France, of playing the Mécenas. He permitted whole swarms of needy scribblers, whom the public and the booksellers refused to feed, to live upon him. And some of a different class, who ought to have been above the habitudes, which placed the trade of literature very much upon a level with that of a begging-letter writer, did not scruple to barter their flattery for a portion of the prodigal Intendant's wealth. Among others, Corneille dedicated his "Cinna" to him. According to the account of him given by his nephew in the "historiette" dedicated to him, he must have been a grossly ignorant, and very worthless man. He is represented to have been absurdly, yet not unreasonably, jealous of his wife, who was, according to our author's account, in all respects good for as little as her husband.

Here is a picture of the life of an "Intendant de Finance" in the provincial capital of his "Intendancy," taken from the account given by the two celebrated friends Chapelle and Bachaumont, of a journey by them in the south of France about the year 1655.

"As soon as we had stepped on shore,—of the Garonne at Bordeaux,—and had spent some time in admiring the situation of the town, we went to the inn of the Chapeau Rouge, where M. Talle-

mant came to call upon us immediately on our arrival. From that moment we returned no more to our lodgings all the time we were at Bordeaux, except to sleep. The days passed in the pleasantest manner conceivable at the house of M. l'Intendant; for all the good people of the town have no other rendezvous than his house. He has made the discovery that most of them are his cousins; and from his style of life one might take him for the Premier President of the province rather than the Intendant. In a word, he is the same man as you have known him at Paris, except that his expenses are larger still! But for Madame l'Intendante, to whisper a secret, she is entirely changed. Quoique," say the travellers, breaking off into verse according to their habit:—

" Quoique sa beauté soit extrême,
Qu'elle ait toujours ce grand œil bleu
Plein de douceur, et plein de feu,
Elle n'est pourtant plus la même;
Car nous avons appris qu'elle aime,
Et qu'elle aime bien fort—le jeu!

She who did not know formerly what cards were, now passes her nights at lansquenet. All the women in the town have become gamblers to please her. They come regularly to her house to divert her, and whoever would see a brilliant assembly has only to pay her a visit. Mademoiselle du Pin,"—this was an illegitimate sister of the Intendant,—“is always there to entertain those who are not fond of play. And, in truth, her conversation is so amusing and witty, that that part of the company is not the worst off. There Messieurs the Gascons may take lessons in polite behaviour and fashionable conversation;—

Mais cette agréable du Pin
Qui dans sa manière est unique
A l'esprit méchant et bien fin;
Et si jamais Gascon s'en pique
Gascon fera mauvaise fin."

No doubt Bordeaux regretted it, when these "noctes cœnæque deùm" came to an end; and the ruined Intendant had to break up his establishment and return to Paris.

There his first cousin, Pierre Tallemant, the father of the jackdaw author, would have nothing to say to him. But Gedeon, the son of Pierre, undertook to manage his affairs for him, and reconcile him to his (Gedeon's) father, on conditions of amendment and prudence in his mode of life. "I undertook," says the historiette writer, "to receive his revenues and give him so much a month, on condition that he would remodel his style of living, and lodge himself after my fashion. I made them cry again and again, both him and his wife. I began by proposing that he should send away his cook. 'All right,' said he; 'I will send him away in four months!' His wife ex-

claimed, 'For heaven's sake, cousin, manage to keep me one foot man!' And then they deceived me. They took lodgings opposite to them for the servants they pretended to discharge! In short, finding them incurable, I gave them up, and would have nothing to say to their affairs!"

The Intendant died, leaving his widow and children destitute, in 1668. The eldest of them, Paul, became an abbé, obtained the Priory of St. Albin, and was made a member of the Academy by the influence of his relations and friends of the family. He produced quantities of occasional verses, idyls, pastorals, words for operas, discourses, panegyrics, funeral orations, and academical harangues, all long since forgotten! When he was made an Academician, neither Quinault nor Racine, nor La Fontaine, nor Boileau, had been found worthy of that honour, though Racine had already produced "*Andromache*," and Boileau had written seven of his immortal "*Satires*!" Nevertheless, what the abbé gave the world was what the world wanted, and the world in return rewarded him well. He had pensions, and priories, and benefices, and was made by the Minister Colbert Superintendent of the Inscriptions in the Royal Residences! In this capacity, when Le Brun painted the well-known series of pictures in the great gallery at Versailles, the Abbé Tallemant furnished the inscriptions to be placed under them. They were, when they had been so placed, voted to be so bad that they were all cancelled! None the less for that mischance, he remained a favourite with the literary clique of the fashionable world of Paris, and, after a peaceful and prosperous life, died in his 70th year; and has a long, though not altogether accurate, article consecrated to him by Daunou in the "*Biographie Universelle*."

Pierre Tallemant, the father of our author, also went to Paris; but before he did so he had already acquired a very handsome fortune. He married twice, and had families by both of his wives, the last of whom was Marie Rambouillet, the sister of the well-known and enormously wealthy financier, Nicolas Rambouillet. "But inasmuch," says his son, the author of the "*Historiettes*," "as he did not seem at all disposed to part with any of his wealth as long as he lived, I determined to look out for a rich wife who would make me independent of my father." Belonging, as he did, both on his father's and on his mother's side, to the world of the "*haute finance*," the great farmers of taxes, or "*partisans*" as they were called in those days, it was not difficult to him to succeed in his purpose. Indeed, he had no need to look farther than to his own first cousin, Elizabeth Rambouillet, the daughter of his mother's brother. The young heiress was only eleven and a half years old, when her cousin was betrothed to her; and the marriage was not solemnized till two years later.

This rich marriage made the life of leisure passed in all the society

of Paris, to which we owe the "Historiettes," possible to Tallemant. But before commencing that Parisian life, he made a journey in Italy, together with two of his brothers, and the young Abbé de Retz. The cause of this companionship is characteristic of the times. The young De Retz had been a candidate for some distinction at the Sorbonne, and his principal competitor had been the Abbé de la Mothe Houdancourt, afterwards Bishop of Rennes and Archbishop of Auch, who was the special protégé of the Cardinal de Richelieu. De Retz was the successful candidate; whereupon Richelieu became furious with anger. The Sorbonne humbly represented, not that De Retz had in truth merited the distinction, but that it was impossible for them to pass over the claims of the nephew of the Cardinal di Gondy, who had been a special protector of the Sorbonne. But Richelieu was appeased by no such representations. Was not he also a protector of the Sorbonne? Whom had they to thank for the new buildings even then in course of construction? The angry prelate threatened to make them very sensible to whom they owed their present if not their past "protection," by forthwith causing the new buildings to be razed to the ground! And the all-powerful minister's anger was so hot, that it was deemed expedient to get the obnoxious successful candidate, the young Abbé de Retz out of the way and out of sight by sending him to travel in Italy. Tallemant's appreciation of his young fellow-traveller,—the "little dark man, very near-sighted, ill-made, ugly, and awkward in all his actions, and dirty in his habits, who could neither write a line straight, nor manage to put his own clothes on,"—shows that his talents of observation, and the habit of recording the fruit of them, were even at that early age developed in no ordinary degree.

When they arrived at Florence, De Retz was lodged in the house of his relative, the Cavaliere Gondi, who was at that time Secretary of State to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. And the remarks which Tallemant makes thereupon afford an amusing instance of that inevitable ignorance of Frenchmen respecting everything not French, which seems to have been as remarkable in the seventeenth as in the nineteenth century. "This Chevalier di Gondy," he writes, "had the portraits of the Gondys of France in his salon; for,"—this "for" is delicious!—"they are not such grands seigneurs in Italy as they are here. They are, however, gentlemen. I saw at Florence sufficient indications of that. But the question is to know whether they did not become so after the favour of which Albert di Gondy was the object, and whether the Florentine Gondys are of that family. Quillet says that when he asked the Chevalier di Gondi whether the Gondys of France were veritable Gondis, he burst out laughing." As well he might;—the Albert above alluded to, who was the ancestor of the French branch of the family, and who came to France with Catherine di Medici, having been a cadet of a family whose ancestors sat as

patricians in the Great Council of Florence in the twelfth century! And Tallemant, it must be observed, was here speaking on a subject that was especially his own, and on which he would have been sure to be well informed, if the matter in hand had been exclusively French.

On his return from his travels his marriage with his wealthy cousin was completed, and his life of a man welcomed in every society in Paris and of jackdaw authorship began, and continued during the remainder of his life, which came to a close on the 6th of November, 1692, in his own house in Paris, "near the *Porte de Richelieu*;"—that is to say, adds his latest editor, about that point of the *Rue de Richelieu* at which the *Rue Neuve Saint Augustin* now begins. He was thus seventy-three when he died; and had been for a full half-century engaged in piling together that mass of gossip which now, in the shape of nine goodly octavo volumes, forms one of the most valuable storehouses of material at the disposition of those who would reconstruct a vivid picture of the Parisian life of the seventeenth century.

It was apropos of the appearance of this the third, and by far the best edition, of the "*Historiettes*," that *Sainte-Beuve*,—the most competent critic in France upon such a subject,—wrote in the "*Moniteur*" of the 19th of January, 1857, an article, entitled "*Tallemant et Bussy*, or the bourgeois backbiter, and the backbiter of quality." It was a happy idea to bring the two men thus together; for *Bussy Rabutin* has also done much towards making a reproduction of that strange seventeenth-century life possible, and was himself one of the most remarkable and characteristic figures in it. And it cannot be denied that both the patrician and plebeian scribbler were backbiters.

Nevertheless, there does not seem to be any ground for thinking that Tallemant was to such a degree, or in such a sense, a backbiter, as to justify us in rejecting his testimony as to facts. Here is a portion of what *Sainte-Beuve* says of him:—

"Tallemant was guided but by one special taste, by one speciality of character. A man of wit after the fashion of our ancestors, curious to a degree that no one is curious nowadays, always on the scent of everything that was said or done around him, informed with the utmost accuracy of all the incidents and all the gossip of society, he records it all; and his record is not so much one of baseness as of drolleries and gaieties."

The English reader, it should be observed, looking at the society photographed by Tallemant des Reaux from an English point of view, would hardly be able to accept the exceeding lenity of this last judgment of the celebrated critic. The impression produced on the mind of the present writer by a perusal of the "*Historiettes*," is that a more profoundly rotten state of society never existed than that which they describe so vividly.

"He writes what he knows," continues M. de Sainte-Beuve, "for the pleasure of writing, with the salt of his style, which is a very good style, and adding to his narrative his own judgment, which is unaffected and active. Such as he is, and so constituted, he is, in his own kind, invaluable and incomparable. If any one had told Bussy Rabutin, that bel esprit and belle plume of the army and the court, that he had in his own day a rival and a master of pointed and naive narration, in that jeering bourgeois, whom one met everywhere, and who was nowhere out of place, he would, assuredly, have been much astonished, and would not have believed the fact."

"Talleyment went everywhere, rubbed shoulders with people of the highest rank, and was intimate with people of talent. His passion was to hear everything;—to gather up everything, and to make a good story of everything. He was born an 'anecdotist,' as La Fontaine was born a 'fabulist.' His friends never ceased saying to him: 'Come now, write that down!' He wrote accordingly; and we profit by it. Were it not for Tallement and his indiscretions, many special studies of the seventeenth century would have been well-nigh impossible. Through him we are members of all the coteries in every quarter of the town; we know all the masks, and the wearers even in their robes-de-chambre. He repeats what was said; he keeps register of current gossip. He tells no lies; but he speaks evil with pleasure, and in gaiety of heart. What he tells us, however, is not to be received lightly. For he is natural and judicious, truthful and penetrating, without affectation, and without pretension. Respecting Henry IV., Sully, Richelieu, and others, who belonged to the age before him, and who were so much greater than he in all respects, he has but picked up the crumbs,—which are still, however, crumbs that have fallen from a good table,—yet upon such subjects he can be listened to only as an echo, and a picker up of reports. But respecting people whom he has seen and known, we have something better than that from him. His authority is as reliable as that of any one. He read the physiognomies around him, and he reproduces them for us. I am entirely of the opinion of M. P. Paris,"—one of the editors of the "*Historiettes*,"—"that Tallement's authority is not to be lightly esteemed, and that we must accept his testimony, failing proof to the contrary. If you dig down at many points you will find the confirmation of things that he asserts with a mere passing word. And it is not only in painting the bourgeois world that he excels. Tallement is still the best painter that we have of the *Hôtel Rambouillet*, and of all that refined society. He judges it with the true French taste of that Augustine age, as befits one who was the friend of Patru,—one who had in him much of a prose La Fontaine, and of Maucroix."

After speaking of Tallement's portrait of M. de Montausier, M. de Sainte-Beuve continues:—

"If that is not a masterpiece of life-like resemblance, where is such to be sought? And there are plenty of such in Tallemant's pages. Open them anywhere. What you will find is gay, well-told, clear, pleasant, well turned out of hand, free from affectation of style. He continues without an effort the race of the story-tellers and fable-writers, and has frequently a touch of the vein of Rabelais. His diction is admirable, exceedingly happy of phrase, full of idiom, familiar, thoroughly Parisian, and imbued with the flavour of the soil in which it grew. The world which Tallemant exhibits to us is the town, properly so called,—the town as it was in the days of Mazarin, either before or after the Fronde, and after the minority of Louis XIV.,—that Paris in which a bourgeoisie, rich, bold, and free, was living a stirring life, the types of which are to be seen in Molière."

This is the judgment of certainly the most competent critic that France has known in the course of this century. And assuredly it does not become an English writer to dispute the entire accuracy of every portion of it, as looked at from a French point of view, and as addressed to Frenchmen of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, there would be risk of leading English readers into a mistake and a disappointment, if it were not added, that they will scarcely find in the "*Historiettes*" all that charm which Sainte-Beuve found. On this side of the Channel the nine volumes of Tallemant's writings may be accepted as an invaluable magazine of materials for the student of social changes, and the historian who would animate his picture by informing it with the life, the flesh, and blood, and genuine pulses of the world he wishes to reproduce. This the jackdaw author has bequeathed us; and as is easily understood, the special value of the bequest arises from the jackdaw nature which prompted him to pick up and hide away whatever no one else thought worth preserving.

But not one English reader in ten thousand will appreciate the aroma of the style of which M. de Sainte-Beuve speaks so enthusiastically. They will find themselves, moreover, in the midst of a very coarse, a very low-minded, and essentially vulgar world, the study of which is mainly valuable for the sake of the clear views which may be got from it of the normal connection between certain social antecedents and certain social consequences. It is right also to state plainly, in order to prevent mistakes, that the "*Historiettes*" must remain a sealed book to English ladies,—except, indeed, to the royal, noble, and fashionable patronesses of Mlle. Schneider's cancan. Ladies who can enjoy that, will find nothing to startle or disgust them in Tallemant. Others had better content themselves with such reproductions of the old jackdaw author's materials as the writers of special "*studies*" of the old-world personages may select, purify, and reproduce for them.

In conclusion, it may be interesting to mention in a few words the circumstances of the finding of Tallemant's long-lost manuscript.

Elizabeth Rambouillet, the wife of our author, survived him, and became sole heiress of the family property. In 1701, she was present at the marriage of her great-niece, Renée Magdaleine de Rambouillet de la Sablière, with M. Trudaine, grandson of Charles Trudaine, who died in 1721, Counsellor of State and Provost of the Merchants. All the Tallemant property came to him by this marriage; and the manuscript of the "*Historiettes*," together with all the other lumber in the old family residence. The Trudaines possessed a château called Montigny Lencoup, in the department of Seine-et-Marne, at a short distance from Montereau; and when at the death of the last of the Trudaines the library,—which had during many generations of them belonged to the château,—was sold, the late Marquis de Châteaugiron, Consul-General of France, first at Bucharest, and afterwards at Nice, where he died, bought a lot, entitled, "*Collection of pieces interesting for the history of France under Henry IV. and Louis XIII.*;" MS. in folio, bound in vellum, containing 798 pages, and filled with curious and little-known facts." M. de Châteaugiron had no competitor for the prize, and it was knocked down to him for twenty francs!

M. de Châteaugiron had the MS. fairly copied; but many years passed before anything more was heard of it. In 1820 he founded, in conjunction with M. Monmerqué, the subsequent editor of the "*Historiettes*," and others, a *Société des Bibliophiles Français*, under the auspices of which Tallemant's work was at last published for the first time, in the years 1834—35.

The "*Historiettes*" had not, however, remained wholly unknown to the literary world during the intervening years. M. le Baron Walekener had made some use of them for his admirable and well-known "*Life of La Fontaine*," and M. Tascheveau had availed himself of them for his excellent and highly curious "*Life of Molière*." A second edition was published in ten duodecimo volumes by the publisher Delloye, equally under the editorial care of M. Monmerqué. But by far the most perfect in all respects is the third, edited by MM. Monmerqué and P. Paris, and published in nine vols. octavo by Techner, in 1850—60.

The value of the book had by this time become extensively recognised. The usual suspicions of fraud and fabrication had been brought forward and abundantly refuted; and the old jackdaw writer has been received *nem. con.* as a French classic by virtue of the value which time has given to his hoards.

AN EDITOR'S TALES.

No. V.

THE SPOTTED DOG.

PART II.—THE RESULT.

DURING the next month we saw a good deal of Mr. Julius Mackenzie, and made ourselves quite at home in Mrs. Grimes's bed-room. We went in and out of the Spotted Dog as if we had known that establishment all our lives, and spent many a quarter of an hour with the hostess in her little parlour, discussing the prospects of Mr. Mackenzie and his family. He had procured for himself decent, if not exactly new, garments out of the money so liberally provided by my learned friend the Doctor, and spent much of his time in the library of the British Museum. He certainly worked very hard, for he did not altogether abandon his old engagement. Before the end of the first month the index of the first volume, nearly completed, had been sent down for the inspection of the Doctor, and had been returned with ample eulogium and some little criticism. The criticisms Mackenzie answered by letter, with true scholarly spirit, and the Doctor was delighted. Nothing could be more pleasant to him than a correspondence, prolonged almost indefinitely, as to the respective merits of a *τὸ* or a *τὸν*, or on the demand for a spondee or an iamb. When he found that the work was really in industrious hands, he ceased to be clamorous for early publication, and gave us to understand privately that Mr. Mackenzie was not to be limited to the sum named. The matter of remuneration was, indeed, left very much to ourselves, and Mackenzie had certainly found a most efficient friend in the author whose works had been confided to his hands.

All this was very pleasant, and Mackenzie throughout that month worked very hard. According to the statements made to me by Mrs. Grimes he took no more gin than what was necessary for a hard-working man. As to the exact quantity of that cordial which she imagined to be beneficial and needful, we made no close inquiry. He certainly kept himself in a condition for work, and so far all went on happily. Nevertheless, there was a terrible skeleton in the cupboard,—or rather out of the cupboard, for the skeleton could not be got to hide itself. A certain portion of his prosperity reached the hands of his wife, and she was behaving herself worse than ever. The four children had been covered with decent garments under Mrs. Grimes's care, and then Mrs. Mackenzie had appeared at the Spotted

Dog, loudly demanding a new outfit for herself. She came not only once, but often, and Mr. Grimes was beginning to protest that he saw too much of the family. We had become very intimate with Mrs. Grimes, and she did not hesitate to confide to us her fears lest "John should cut up rough," before the thing was completed. "You see," she said, "it is against the house, no doubt, that woman coming nigh it." But still she was firm, and Mackenzie was not disturbed in the possession of the bed-room. At last Mrs. Mackenzie was provided with some articles of female attire;—and then, on the very next day, she and the four children were again stripped almost naked. The wretched creature must have steeped herself in gin to the shoulders, for in one day she made a sweep of everything. She then came in a state of furious intoxication to the Spotted Dog, and was removed by the police under the express order of the landlord.

We can hardly say which was the most surprising to us, the loyalty of Mrs. Grimes or the patience of John. During that night, as we were told two days afterwards by his wife, he stormed with passion. The papers she had locked up in order that he should not get at them and destroy them. He swore that everything should be cleared out on the following morning. But when the morning came he did not even say a word to Mackenzie, as the wretched, downcast, broken-hearted creature passed up-stairs to his work. "You see I knows him, and how to deal with him," said Mrs. Grimes. "There ain't another like himself nowheres;—he's that good. A softer-hearted man there ain't in the public line. He can speak dreadful when his dander is up, and can look——; oh, laws, he just can look at you! But he could no more put his hands upon a woman, in the way of hurting,—no more than be an archbishop." Where could be the man, thought we to ourselves as this was said to us, who could have put a hand,—in the way of hurting,—upon Mrs. Grimes?

On that occasion, to the best of our belief, the policeman contented himself with depositing Mrs. Mackenzie at her own lodgings. On the next day she was picked up drunk in the street, and carried away to the lock-up house. At the very moment in which the story was being told to us by Mrs. Grimes, Mackenzie had gone to the police office to pay the fine, and to bring his wife home. We asked with dismay and surprise why he should interfere to rescue her, — why he did not leave her in custody as long as the police would keep her? "Who'd there be to look after the children?" asked Mrs. Grimes, as though she were offended at our suggestion. Then she went on to explain that in such a household as that of poor Mackenzie the wife is absolutely a necessity, even though she be an habitual drunkard. Intolerable as she was, her services were necessary to him. "A husband as drinks is bad," said Mrs. Grimes,—with something, we thought, of an apologetic tone for the vice upon which her own prosperity was partly built,— "but when a woman takes to it, it's the

—devil." We thought that she was right, as we pictured to ourselves that man of letters satisfying the magistrate's demand for his wife's misconduct, and taking the degraded, half-naked creature once more home to his children.

We saw him about twelve o'clock on that day, and he had then, too evidently, been endeavouring to support his misery by the free use of alcohol. We did not speak of it down in the parlour; but even Mrs. Grimes, we think, would have admitted that he had taken more than was good for him. He was sitting up in the bed-room with his head hanging upon his hand, with a swarm of our learned friend's papers spread on the table before him. Mrs. Grimes, when he entered the house, had gone up-stairs to give them out to him; but he had made no attempt to settle himself to his work. "All this kind of thing must come to an end," he said to us with a thick, husky voice. We muttered something to him as to the need there was that he should exert a manly courage in his troubles. "Manly!" he said. "Well, yes; manly. A man should be a man, of course. There are some things which a man can't bear. I've borne more than enough, and I'll have an end of it."

"We shall never forget that scene. After a while he got up, and became almost violent. Talk of bearing! Who had borne half as much as he? There were things a man should not bear. As for manliness, he believed that the truly manly thing would be to put an end to the lives of his wife, his children, and himself at one swoop. Of course the judgment of a mealy-mouthed world would be against him, but what would that matter to him when he and they had vanished out of this miserable place into the infinite realms of nothingness? Was he fit to live, or were they? Was there any chance for his children but that of becoming thieves and prostitutes? And for that poor wretch of a woman, from out of whose bosom even her human instincts had been washed by gin,—would not death to her be, indeed, a charity? There was but one drawback to all this. When he should have destroyed them, how would it be with him if he should afterwards fail to make sure work with his own life? In such case it was not hanging that he would fear, but the self-reproach that would come upon him in that he had succeeded in sending others out of their misery, but had flinched when his own turn had come. Though he was drunk when he said these horrid things, or so nearly drunk that he could not perfect the articulation of his words, still there was a marvellous eloquence with him. When we attempted to answer, and told him of that canon which had been set against self-slaughter, he laughed us to scorn. There was something terrible to us in the audacity of the arguments which he used, when he asserted for himself the right to shuffle off from his shoulders a burden which they had not been made broad enough to bear. There was an intensity and a thorough hopelessness of suffering in

his case, an openness of acknowledged degradation, which robbed us for the time of all that power which the respectable ones of the earth have over the disreputable. When we came upon him with our wise saws, our wisdom was shattered instantly, and flung back upon us in fragments. What promise could we dare to hold out to him that further patience would produce any result that could be beneficial? What further harm could any such doing on his part bring upon him? Did we think that were he brought out to stand at the gallows' foot with the knowledge that ten minutes would usher him into what folks called eternity, his sense of suffering would be as great as it had been when he conducted that woman out of court and along the streets to his home, amidst the jeering congratulations of his neighbours? "When you have fallen so low," said he, "that you can fall no lower, the ordinary trammels of the world cease to bind you." Though his words were knocked against each other with the dulled utterances of intoxication, his intellect was terribly clear, and his scorn for himself, and for the world that had so treated him, was irrepressible.

We must have been over an hour with him up there in the bed-room, and even then we did not leave him. As it was manifest that he could do no work on that day, we collected the papers together, and proposed that he should take a walk with us. He was patient as we shovelled together the Doctor's pages, and did not object to our suggestion. We found it necessary to call up Mrs. Grimes to assist us in putting away the "Opus magnum," and were astonished to find how much she had come to know about the work. Added to the Doctor's manuscript there were now the pages of Mackenzie's indexes,—and there were other pages of reference, for use in making future indexes,—as to all of which Mrs. Grimes seemed to be quite at home. We have no doubt that she was familiar with the names of Greek tragedians, and could have pointed out to us in print the performances of the chorus. "A little fresh air 'll do you a deal of good, Mr. Mackenzie," she said to the unfortunate man,—“only take a biscuit in your pocket.” We got him out into the street, but he angrily refused to take the biscuit which she endeavoured to force into his hands.

That was a memorable walk. Turning from the end of Liquorpond Street up Gray's Inn Lane towards Holborn, we at once came upon the entrance into a miserable court. "There," said he; "it is down there that I live. She is sleeping it off now, and the children are hanging about her, wondering whether mother has got money to have another go at it when she rises. I'd take you down to see it all, only it'd sicken you." We did not offer to go down the court, abstaining rather for his sake than for our own. The look of the place was as of a spot squalid, fever-stricken, and utterly degraded. And this man who was our companion had been born and bred a gentleman,—had been nourished with that soft and gentle care which

comes of wealth and love combined,—had received the education which the country gives to her most favoured sons, and had taken such advantage of that education as is seldom taken by any of those favoured ones ;—and Cucumber Court, with a drunken wife and four half-clothed, half-starved children, was the condition to which he had brought himself ! The world knows nothing higher nor brighter than had been his outset in life,—nothing lower nor more debased than the result. And yet he was one whose time and intellect had been employed upon the pursuit of knowledge,—who even up to this day had high ideas of what should be a man's career,—who worked very hard and had always worked,—who as far as we knew had struck upon no rocks in the pursuit of mere pleasure. It had all come to him from that idea of his youth that it would be good for him “to take refuge from the conventional thralldom of so-called gentlemen amidst the liberty of the lower orders.” His life, as he had himself owned, had indeed been a mistake.

We passed on from the court, and crossing the road went through the squares of Gray's Inn, down Chancery Lane, through the little iron gate into Lincoln's Inn, round, through the old square,—than which we know no place in London more conducive to suicide, and the new square,—which has a gloom of its own, not so potent, and savouring only of madness, till at last we found ourselves in the Temple Gardens. I do not know why we had thus clung to the purlieus of the Law, except it was that he was telling us how in his early days, when he had been sent away from Cambridge,—as on this occasion he acknowledged to us, for an attempt to pull the tutor's nose, in revenge for a supposed insult,—he had intended to push his fortunes as a barrister. He pointed up to a certain window in a dark corner of that suicidal old court, and told us that for one year he had there sat at the feet of a great Gamaliel in Chancery, and had worked with all his energies. Of course we asked him why he had left a prospect so alluring. Though his answers to us were not quite explicit, we think that he did not attempt to conceal the truth. He learned to drink, and that Gamaliel took upon himself to rebuke the failing, and by the end of that year he had quarrelled irreconcilably with his family. There had been great wrath at home when he was sent from Cambridge, greater wrath when he expressed his opinion upon certain questions of religious faith, and wrath to the final severance of all family relations when he told the chosen Gamaliel that he should get drunk as often as he pleased. After that he had “taken refuge among the lower orders,” and his life, such as it was, had come of it.

In Fleet Street, as we came out of the Temple, we turned into an eating-house and had some food. By this time the exercise and the air had carried off the fumes of the liquor which he had taken, and

I knew that it would be well that he should eat. We had a mutton chop and a hot potato and a pint of beer each, and sat down to table for the first and last time as mutual friends. It was odd to see how in his converse with us on that day he seemed to possess a double identity. Though the hopeless misery of his condition was always present to him, was constantly on his tongue, yet he could talk about his own career and his own character as though they belonged to a third person. He could even laugh at the wretched mistake he had made in life, and speculate as to its consequences. For himself he was well aware that death was the only release that he could expect. We did not dare to tell him that if his wife should die, then things might be better with him. We could only suggest to him that work itself, if he would do honest work, would console him for many sufferings. "You don't know the filth of it," he said to us. Ah, dear; how well we remember the terrible word, and the gesture with which he pronounced it, and the gleam of his eyes as he said it! His manner to us on this occasion was completely changed, and we had a gratification in feeling that a sense had come back upon him of his old associations. "I remember this room so well," he said,—"when I used to have friends and money." And, indeed, the room was one which has been made memorable by Genius. "I did not think ever to have found myself here again." We observed, however, that he could not eat the food that was placed before him. A morsel or two of the meat he swallowed, and struggled to eat the crust of his bread, but he could not make a clean plate of it, as we did—regretting that the nature of chops did not allow of ampler dimensions. His beer was quickly finished, and we suggested to him a second tankard. With a queer, half-abashed twinkle of the eye, he accepted our offer, and then the second pint disappeared also. We had our doubts on the subject, but at last decided against any further offer. Had he chosen to call for it he must have had a third; but he did not call for it. We left him at the door of the tavern, and he then promised that in spite of all that he had suffered and all that he had said he would make another effort to complete the Doctor's work. "Whether I go or stay," he said, "I'd like to earn the money that I've spent." There was something terrible in that idea of his going! Whither was he to go?

The Doctor heard nothing of the misfortune of these three or four inauspicious days; and the work was again going on prosperously when he came up again to London at the end of the second month. He told us something of his banker, and something of his lawyer, and murmured a word or two as to a new curate whom he needed; but we knew that he had come up to London because he could not bear a longer absence from the great object of his affections. He could not bear to be thus parted from his manuscript, and was again

childishly anxious that a portion of it should be in the printer's hands. "At sixty-five, sir," he said to us, "a man has no time to dally with his work." He had been dallying with his work all his life, and we sincerely believed that it would be well with him if he could be contented to dally with it to the end. If all that Mackenzie said of it was true, the Doctor's erudition was not equalled by his originality, or by his judgment. Of that question, however, we could take no cognisance. He was bent upon publishing, and as he was willing and able to pay for his whim and was his own master, nothing that we could do would keep him out of the printer's hands.

He was desirous of seeing Mackenzie, and was anxious once even to see him at his work. Of course he could meet his assistant in our editorial room, and all the papers could easily be brought backwards and forwards in the old dispatch-box. But in the interest of all parties we hesitated in taking our revered and reverend friend to the Spotted Dog. Though we had told him that his work was being done at a public-house, we thought that his mind had conceived the idea of some modest inn, and that he would be shocked at being introduced to a place which he would regard simply as a gin-shop. Mrs. Grimes, or if not Mrs. Grimes, then Mr. Grimes, might object to another visitor to their bed-room; and Mackenzie himself would be thrown out of gear by the appearance of those clerical gaiters upon the humble scene of his labours. We, therefore, gave him such reasons as were available for submitting, at any rate for the present, to having the papers brought up to him at our room. And we ourselves went down to the Spotted Dog to make an appointment with Mackenzie for the following day. We had last seen him about a week before, and then the task was progressing well. He had told us that another fortnight would finish it. We had inquired also of Mrs. Grimes about the man's wife. All she could tell us was that the woman had not again troubled them at the Spotted Dog. She expressed her belief, however, that the drunkard had been more than once in the hands of the police since the day on which Mackenzie had walked with us through the squares of the Inns of Court.

It was late when we reached the public-house on the occasion to which we now allude, and the evening was dark and rainy. It was then the end of January, and it might have been about six o'clock. We knew that we should not find Mackenzie at the public-house; but it was probable that Mrs. Grimes could send for him, or, at least, could make the appointment for us. We went into the little parlour, where she was seated with her husband, and we could immediately see, from the countenance of both of them, that something was amiss. We began by telling Mrs. Grimes that the Doctor had come to town. "Mackenzie ain't here, sir," said Mrs. Grimes, and we almost thought that the very tone of her voice was altered. We explained that we

had not expected to find him at that hour, and asked if she could send for him. She only shook her head. Grimes was standing with his back to the fire, and his hands in his trousers-pockets. Up to this moment he had not spoken a word. We asked if the man was drunk. She again shook her head. Could she bid him to come to us to-morrow, and bring the box and the papers with him. Again she shook her head.

"I've told her that I won't have no more of it," said Grimes; "nor yet I won't. He was drunk this morning,—as drunk as an owl."

"He was sober, John, as you are, when he came for the papers this afternoon at two o'clock." So the box and the papers had all been taken away!

"And she was here yesterday rampaging about the place, without as much clothes on as would cover her nakedness," said Mr. Grimes. "I won't have no more of it. I've done for that man what his own flesh and blood wouldn't do. I know that; and I won't have no more of it. Mary Anne, you'll have that table cleared out after breakfast to-morrow." When a man, to whom his wife is usually Polly, addresses her as Mary Anne, then it may be surmised that that man is in earnest. We knew that he was in earnest, and she knew it also.

"He wasn't drunk, John,—no, nor yet in liquor, when he come and took away that box this afternoon." We understood this reiterated assertion. It was in some sort excusing to us her own breach of trust in having allowed the manuscript to be withdrawn from her own charge, or was assuring us that, at the worst, she had not been guilty of the impropriety of allowing the man to take it away when he was unfit to have it in his charge. As for blaming her, who could have thought of it? Had Mackenzie at any time chosen to pass downstairs with the box in his hands, it was not to be expected that she should stop him violently. And now that he had done so, we could not blame her; but we felt that a great weight had fallen upon our own hearts. If evil should come to the manuscript would not the Doctor's wrath fall upon us with a crushing weight? Something must be done at once. And we suggested that it would be well that somebody should go round to Cucumber Court. "I'd go as soon as look," said Mrs. Grimes, "but he won't let me."

"You don't stir a foot out of this to-night;—not that way," said Mr. Grimes.

"Who wants to stir?" said Mrs. Grimes.

We felt that there was something more to be told than we had yet heard, and a great fear fell upon us. The woman's manner to us was altered, and we were sure that this had come not from altered feelings on her part, but from circumstances which had frightened her. It

was not her husband that she feared, but the truth of something that her husband had said to her. "If there is anything more to tell, for God's sake tell it," we said, addressing ourselves rather to the man than to the woman. Then Grimes did tell us his story. On the previous evening Mackenzie had received three or four sovereigns from Mrs. Grimes, being, of course, a portion of the Doctor's payments; and early on that morning all Liquorpond Street had been in a state of excitement with the drunken fury of Mackenzie's wife. She had found her way into the Spotted Dog, and was being actually extruded by the strength of Grimes himself,—of Grimes, who had been brought down from his bed-room by the row when he was only half-dressed,—when Mackenzie himself, equally drunk, appeared upon the scene. "No, John;—not equally drunk," said Mrs. Grimes. "Bother!" exclaimed her husband, going on with his story. The man had struggled to take the woman by the arm, and the two had fallen and rolled in the street together. "I was looking out of the window, and it was awful to see," said Mrs. Grimes. We felt that it was "awful to hear." A man,—and such a man, rolling in the gutter with a drunken woman,—himself drunk,—and that woman his wife! "There ain't to be no more of it at the Spotted Dog; that's all," said John Grimes, as he finished his part of the story.

Then, at last, Mrs. Grimes became voluble. All this had occurred before nine in the morning. "The woman must have been at it all night," she said. "So must the man," said John. "Anyways he came back about dinner, and he was sober then. I asked him not to go up, and offered to make him a cup of tea. It was just as you'd gone out after dinner, John."

"He won't have no more tea here," said John.

"And he didn't have any then. He wouldn't, he said to me, but went up-stairs. What was I to do? I couldn't tell him as he shouldn't. Well;—during the row in the morning John had said something as to Mackenzie not coming about the premises any more."

"Of course I did," said Grimes.

"He was a little cut, then, no doubt," continued the lady; "and I didn't think as he would have noticed what John had said."

"I mean it to be noticed now."

"He had noticed it then, sir, though he wasn't just as he should be at that hour of the morning. Well;—what does he do? He goes up-stairs and packs up all the papers at once. Leastways, that's as I suppose. They ain't there now. You can go and look if you please, sir. Well; when he came down, whether I was in the kitchen,—though it isn't often as my eyes is off the bar, or in the tap-room, or busy drawing, which I do do sometimes, sir, when there are a many calling for liquor, I can't say;—but if I ain't never to stand upright

again, I didn't see him pass out with the box. But Miss Wilcox did. You can ask her." Miss Wilcox was the young lady in the bar, whom we did not think ourselves called upon to examine, feeling no doubt whatever as to the fact of the box having been taken away by Mackenzie. In all this Mrs. Grimes seemed to defend herself, as though some serious charge was to be brought against her; whereas all that she had done had been done out of pure charity; and in exercising her charity towards Mackenzie she had shown an almost exaggerated kindness towards ourselves.

"If there's anything wrong, it isn't your fault," we said.

"Nor yet mine," said John Grimes.

"No, indeed," we replied.

"It ain't none of our faults," continued he; "only this;—you can't wash a blackamoor white, nor it ain't no use trying. He don't come here any more, that's all. A man in drink we don't mind. We has to put up with it. And they ain't that tarnation desperate as is a woman. As long as a man can keep his legs he'll try to steady hisself; but there is women who, when they've liquor, gets a fury for rampaging. There ain't a many as can beat this one, sir. She's that strong, it took four of us to hold her; though she can't hardly do a stroke of work, she's that weak when she's sober."

We had now heard the whole story, and, while hearing it, had determined that it was our duty to go round into Cucumber Court and seek the manuscript and the box. We were unwilling to pry into the wretchedness of the man's home; but something was due to the Doctor; and we had to make that appointment for the morrow, if it were still possible that such an appointment should be kept. We asked for the number of the house, remembering well the entrance into the court. Then there was a whisper between John and his wife, and the husband offered to accompany us. "It's a roughish place," he said, "but they know me." "He'd better go along with you," said Mrs. Grimes. We, of course, were glad of such companionship, and glad also to find that the landlord, upon whom we had inflicted so much trouble, was still sufficiently our friend to take this trouble on our behalf.

"It's a dreary place enough," said Grimes, as he led us up the narrow archway. Indeed it was a dreary place. The court spread itself a little in breadth, but very little, when the passage was passed, and there were houses on each side of it. There was neither gutter nor, as far as we saw, drain, but the broken flags were slippery with moist mud, and here and there, strewed about between the houses, there were the remains of cabbages and turnip-tops. The place swarmed with children, over whom one ghastly gas-lamp at the end of the court threw a flickering and uncertain light. There was a clamour of scolding voices, to which it seemed that no heed was paid; and

there was a smell of damp, rotting nastiness, amidst which it seemed to us to be almost impossible that life should be continued. Grimes led the way, without further speech, to the middle house on the left hand of the court, and asked a man who was sitting on the low threshold of the door whether Mackenzie was within. "So that be you, Muster Grimes; be it?" said the man, without stirring. "Yes; he's there I guess, but they've been and took her." Then we passed on into the house. "No matter about that," said the man, as we apologised for kicking him in our passage. He had not moved, and it had been impossible to enter without kicking him.

It seemed that Mackenzie held the two rooms on the ground floor, and we entered them at once. There was no light, but we could see the glimmer of a fire in the grate; and presently we became aware of the presence of children. Grimes asked after Mackenzie, and a girl's voice told us that he was in the inner room. The publican then demanded a light, and the girl, with some hesitation, lit the end of a farthing candle, which was fixed in a small bottle. We endeavoured to look round the room by the glimmer which this afforded, but could see nothing but the presence of four children, three of whom seemed to be seated in apathy on the floor. Grimes, taking the candle in his hand, passed at once into the other room, and we followed him. Holding the bottle something over his head he contrived to throw a gleam of light upon one of the two beds with which the room was fitted, and there we saw the body of Julius Mackenzie stretched in the torpor of dead intoxication. His head lay against the wall, his body was across the bed, and his feet dangled on to the floor. He still wore his dirty boots, and his clothes as he had worn them in the morning. No sight so piteous, so wretched, and at the same time so eloquent had we ever seen before. His eyes were closed, and the light of his face was therefore quenched. His mouth was open, and the slaver had fallen upon his beard. His dark, clotted hair had been pulled over his face by the unconscious movement of his hands. There came from him a stertorous sound of breathing, as though he were being choked by the attitude in which he lay; and even in his drunkenness there was an uneasy twitching as of pain about his face. And there sat, and had been sitting for hours past, the four children in the other room, knowing the condition of the parent whom they most respected, but not even endeavouring to do anything for his comfort. What could they do? They knew, by long training and thorough experience, that a fit of drunkenness had to be got out of by sleep. To them there was nothing shocking in it. It was but a periodical misfortune. "She'll have to own he's been and done it now," said Grimes, looking down upon the man, and alluding to his wife's good-natured obstinacy. He handed the candle to us, and, with a mixture of tenderness and roughness, of

which the roughness was only in the manner and the tenderness was real, he raised Mackenzie's head and placed it on the bolster, and lifted the man's legs on to the bed. Then he took off the man's boots, and the old silk handkerchief from the neck, and pulled the trousers straight, and arranged the folds of the coat. It was almost as though he were laying out one that was dead. The eldest girl was now standing by us, and Grimes asked her how long her father had been in that condition. "Jack Hoggart brought him in just afore it was dark," said the girl. Then it was explained to us that Jack Hoggart was the man whom we had seen sitting on the door-step.

"And your mother?" asked Grimes.

"The perlice took her afore dinner."

"And you children;—what have you had to eat?" In answer to this the girl only shook her head. Grimes took no immediate notice of this, but called the drunken man by his name, and shook his shoulder, and looked round to a broken ewer which stood on the little table, for water to dash upon him;—but there was no water in the jug. He called again, and repeated the shaking, and at last Mackenzie opened his eyes, and in a dull, half-conscious manner looked up at us. "Come, my man," said Grimes, "shake this off and have done with it."

"Haden't you better try to get up?" we asked.

There was a faint attempt at rising, then a smile,—a smile which was terrible to witness, so sad was all which it said; then a look of utter, abject misery, coming as we thought from a momentary remembrance of his degradation; and after that he sank back in the dull, brutal, painless, death-like apathy of absolute unconsciousness.

"It'll be morning afore he'll move," said the girl.

"She's about right," said Grimes. "He's got it too heavy for us to do anything but just leave him. We'll take a look for the box and the papers."

And the man upon whom we were looking down had been born a gentleman, and was a finished scholar,—one so well educated, so ripe in literary acquirement, that we knew few whom we could call his equal! Judging of the matter by the light of our reason, we cannot say that the horror of the scene should have been enhanced to us by these recollections. Had the man been a shoemaker or a coal-heaver there would have been enough of tragedy in it to make an angel weep,—that sight of the child standing by the bedside of her drunken father, while the other parent was away in custody,—and in no degree shocked at what she saw, because the thing was so common to her! But the thought of what the man had been, of what he was, of what he might have been, and the steps by which he had brought himself to the foul degradation which we witnessed, filled us with a dismay which we should hardly have felt had the

gifts which he had polluted and the intellect which he had wasted been less capable of noble uses.

Our purpose in coming to the court was to rescue the Doctor's papers from danger, and we turned to accompany Grimes into the other room. As we did so the publican asked the girl if she knew anything of a black box which her father had taken away from the Spotted Dog. "The box is here," said the girl.

"And the papers?" asked Grimes. Thereupon the girl shook her head, and we both hurried into the outer room. I hardly know who first discovered the sight which we encountered, or whether it was shown to us by the child. The whole fire-place was strewn with half-burnt sheets of manuscript. There were scraps of pages of which almost the whole had been destroyed, others which were hardly more than scorched, and heaps of paper-ashes all lying tumbled together about the fender. We went down on our knees to examine them, thinking at the moment that the poor creature might in his despair have burned his own work and have spared that of the Doctor. But it was not so. We found scores of charred pages of the Doctor's elaborate handwriting. By this time Grimes had found the open box, and we perceived that the sheets remaining in it were tumbled and huddled together in absolute confusion. There were pages of the various volumes mixed with those which Mackenzie himself had written, and they were all crushed, and rolled, and twisted, as though they had been thrust thither as waste-paper,—out of the way. "'Twas mother as done it," said the girl, "and we put 'em back again when the perlice took her."

There was nothing more to learn,—nothing more by the hearing which any useful clue could be obtained. What had been the exact course of the scenes which had been enacted there that morning it little booted us to inquire. It was enough and more than enough that we knew that the mischief had been done. We went down on our knees before the fire, and rescued from the ashes with our hands every fragment of manuscript that we could find. Then we put the mass altogether into the box, and gazed upon the wretched remnants almost in tears. "You'd better go and get a bit of some 'at to eat," said Grimes, handing a coin to the elder girl. "It's hard on them to starve 'cause their father's drunk, sir." Then he took the closed box in his hand, and we followed him out into the street. "I'll send or step up and look after him to-morrow," said Grimes, as he put us and the box into a cab. We little thought that when we made to the drunkard that foolish request to arise, that we should never speak to him again.

As we returned to our office in the cab that we might deposit the box there ready for the following day, our mind was chiefly occupied in thinking over the undeserved grievances which had fallen upon

ourselves. We had been moved by the charitable desire to do services to two different persons,—to the learned Doctor, and to the red-nosed drunkard, and this had come of it! There had been nothing for us to gain by assisting either the one or the other. We had taken infinite trouble, attempting to bring together two men who wanted each other's services,—working hard in sheer benevolence;—and what had been the result? We had spent half-an-hour on our knees in the undignified and almost disreputable work of raking among Mrs. Mackenzie's cinders, and now we had to face the anger, the dismay, the reproach, and,—worse than all,—the agony of the Doctor. As to Mackenzie,—we asserted to ourselves again and again that nothing further could be done for him. He had made his bed, and he must lie upon it; but, oh! why,—why had we attempted to meddle with a being so degraded? We got out of the cab at our office door, thinking of the Doctor's countenance as we should see it on the morrow. Our heart sank within us, and we asked ourselves, if it was so bad with us now, how it would be with us when we returned to the place on the following morning.

But on the following morning we did return. No doubt each individual reader to whom we address ourselves has at some period felt that indescribable load of personal, short-lived care, which causes the heart to sink down into the boots. It is not great grief that does it;—nor is it excessive fear; but the unpleasant operation comes from the mixture of the two. It is the anticipation of some imperfectly understood evil that does it,—some evil out of which there might perhaps be an escape if we could only see the way. In this case we saw no way out of it. The Doctor was to be with us at one o'clock, and he would come with smiles, expecting to meet his learned colleague. How should we break it to the Doctor? We might indeed send to him, putting off the meeting, but the advantage coming from that would be slight, if any. We must see the injured Grecian sooner or later; and we had resolved, much as we feared, that the evil hour should not be postponed. We spent an hour that morning in arranging the fragments. Of the first volume about a third had been destroyed. Of the second nearly every page had been either burned or mutilated. Of the third but little had been injured. Mackenzie's own work had fared better than the Doctor's; but there was no comfort in that. After what had passed I thought it quite improbable that the Doctor would make any use of Mackenzie's work. So much of the manuscript as could still be placed in continuous pages, we laid out upon the table, volume by volume,—that in the middle sinking down from its original goodly bulk almost to the dimensions of a poor sermon;—and the half-burned bits we left in the box. Then we sat ourselves down at our accustomed table, and pretended to try to work. Our ears were very sharp, and we heard

the Doctor's step upon our stairs within a minute or two of the appointed time. Our heart went to the very toes of our boots. We shuffled in our chair, rose from it, and sat down again,—and were conscious that we were not equal to the occasion. Hitherto we had, after some mild literary form, patronised the Doctor,—as a man of letters in town will patronise his literary friend from the country;—but we now feared him as a truant school-boy fears his master. And yet it was so necessary that we should wear some air of self-assurance!

In a moment he was with us, wearing that bland smile, which we knew so well, and which at the present moment almost overpowered us. We had been sure that he would wear that smile, and had especially feared it. "Ah," said he, grasping us by the hand, "I thought I should have been late. I see that our friend is not here yet."

"Doctor," we replied, "a great misfortune has happened."

"A great misfortune! Mr. Mackenzie is not dead?"

"No;—he is not dead. Perhaps it would have been better that he had died long since. He has destroyed your manuscript." The Doctor's face fell, and his hands at the same time, and he stood looking at us. "I need not tell you, Doctor, what my feelings are, and how great my remorse."

"Destroyed it!" Then we took him by the hand and led him to the table. He turned first upon the appetizing and comparatively uninjured third volume, and seemed to think that we had hoaxed him. "This is not destroyed," he said, with a smile. But before I could explain anything, his hands were among the fragments in the box. "As I am a living man, they have burned it!" he exclaimed. "I—I—I—" Then he turned from me, and walked twice the length of the room, backwards and forwards, while we stood still, patiently waiting the explosion of his wrath. "My friend," he said, when his walk was over, "a great man underwent the same sorrow. Newton's manuscript was burned. I will take it home with me, and we will say no more about it." I never thought very much of the Doctor as a divine, but I hold him to have been as good a Christian as I ever met.

But that plan of his of saying no more about it could not quite be carried out. I was endeavouring to explain to him, as I thought it necessary to do, the circumstances of the case, and he was protesting his indifference to any such details, when there came a knock at the door, and the boy who waited on us below ushered Mrs. Grimes into the room. As the reader is aware, we had, during the last two months, become very intimate with the landlady of the Spotted Dog, but we had never hitherto had the pleasure of seeing her outside her own house. "Oh, Mr.——" she began, and then she paused, seeing the Doctor.

We thought it expedient that there should be some introduction. "Mrs. Grimes," we said, "this is the gentleman whose invaluable manuscript has been destroyed by that unfortunate drunkard."

"Oh, then;—you're the Doctor, sir?" The Doctor bowed and smiled. His heart must have been very heavy, but he bowed politely and smiled sweetly. "Oh, dear," she said, "I don't know how to tell you!"

"To tell us what?" asked the Doctor.

"What has happened since?" we demanded. The woman stood shaking before us, and then sank into a chair. Then arose to us at the moment some idea that the drunken woman, in her mad rage, had done some great damage to the Spotted Dog,—had set fire to the house, or injured Mr. Grimes personally, or perhaps run a muck amidst the jugs and pitchers, window glass, and gas lights. Something had been done which would give the Grimeses a pecuniary claim on me or on the Doctor, and the woman had been sent hither to make the first protest. Oh,—when should I see the last of the results of my imprudence in having attempted to befriend such a one as Julius Mackenzie! "If you have anything to tell, you had better tell it," we said, gravely.

"He's been, and—"

"Not destroyed himself?" asked the Doctor.

"Oh yes, sir. He have indeed,—from ear to ear,—and is now a lying at the Spotted Dog!"

* * * * *

And so, after all, that was the end of Julius Mackenzie! We need hardly say that our feelings, which up to that moment had been very hostile to the man, underwent a sudden revulsion. Poor, overburdened, struggling, ill-used, abandoned creature! The world had been hard upon him, with a severity which almost induced one to make complaint against omnipotence. The poor wretch had been willing to work, had been industrious in his calling, had had capacity for work; and he had also struggled gallantly against his evil fate, had recognised and endeavoured to perform his duty to his children and to the miserable woman who had brought him to his ruin! And that sin of drunkenness had seemed to us to be in him rather the reflex of her vice than the result of his own vicious tendencies. Still it might be doubtful whether she had not learned the vice from him. They had both in truth been drunkards as long as they had been known in the neighbourhood of the Spotted Dog; but it was stated by all who had known them there that he was never seen to be drunk unless when she had disgraced him by the public exposure of her own abomination. Such as he was he had now come to his end! This was the upshot of his loud claims for liberty from his youth upwards;—liberty as against his father and family; liberty as against his college tutor;

liberty as against all pastors, masters, and instructors; liberty as against the conventional thralldom of the world! He was now lying a wretched corpse at the Spotted Dog, with his throat cut from ear to ear, till the coroner's jury should have decided whether or not they would call him a suicide!

Mrs. Grimes had come to tell us that the coroner was to be at the Spotted Dog at four o'clock, and to say that her husband hoped that we would be present. We had seen Mackenzie so lately, and had so much to do with the employment of the last days of his life, that we could not refuse this request though it came accompanied by no legal summons. Then Mrs. Grimes again became voluble, and poured out to us her biography of Mackenzie as far as she knew it. He had been married to the woman ten years, and certainly had been a drunkard before he married her. "As for her, she'd been well-nigh suckled on gin," said Mrs. Grimes, "though he didn't know it, poor fellow." Whether this was true or not, she had certainly taken to drink soon after her marriage, and then his life had been passed in alternate fits of despondency and of desperate efforts to improve his own condition and that of his children. Mrs. Grimes declared to us that when the fit came on them,—when the woman had begun and the man had followed,—they would expend upon drink in two days what would have kept the family for a fortnight. "They say as how it was nothing for them to swallow forty shillings' worth of gin in forty-eight hours." The Doctor held up his hands in horror. "And it didn't, none of it, come our way," said Mrs. Grimes. "Indeed, John wouldn't let us serve it for 'em."

She sat there for half-an-hour, and during the whole time she was telling us of the man's life; but the reader will already have heard more than enough of it. By what immediate demon the woman had been instigated to burn the husband's work almost immediately on its production within her own home, we never heard. Doubtless there had been some terrible scene in which the man's sufferings must have been carried almost beyond endurance. "And he had feelings, sir, he had," said Mrs. Grimes; "he knew as a woman should be decent, and a man's wife especial; I'm sure we pitied him so, John and I, that we could have cried over him. John would say a hard word to him at times, but he'd have walked round London to do him a good turn. John ain't to say edicated hisself, but he do respect learning."

When she had told us all, Mrs. Grimes went, and we were left alone with the Doctor. He at once consented to accompany us to the Spotted Dog, and we spent the hour that still remained to us in discussing the fate of the unfortunate man. We doubt whether an allusion was made during the time to the burned manuscript. If so, it was certainly not made by the Doctor himself. The tragedy which had occurred in connection with it had made him feel it to be un-

fitting even to mention his own loss. That such a one should have gone to his account in such a manner, without hope, without belief, and without fear,—as Burley said to Bothwell, and Bothwell boasted to Burley,—that was the theme of the Doctor's discourse. "The mercy of God is infinite," he said, bowing his head, with closed eyes and folded hands. To threaten while the life is in the man is human. To believe in the execution of those threats when the life has passed away is almost beyond the power of humanity.

At the hour fixed we were at the Spotted Dog, and found there a crowd assembled. The coroner was already seated in Mrs. Grimes's little parlour, and the body as we were told had been laid out in the tap-room. The inquest was soon over. The fact that he had destroyed himself in the low state of physical suffering and mental despondency which followed his intoxication was not doubted. At the very time that he was doing it, his wife was being taken from the lock-up house to the police office in the police van. He was not penniless, for he had sent the children out with money for their breakfasts, giving special caution as to the youngest, a little toddling thing of three years old;—and then he had done it. The eldest girl, returning to the house, had found him lying dead upon the floor. We were called upon for our evidence, and went into the tap-room accompanied by the Doctor. Alas! the very table which had been dragged up-stairs into the landlady's bed-room with the charitable object of assisting Mackenzie in his work,—the table at which we had sat with him conning the Doctor's pages,—had now been dragged down again and was used for another purpose. We had little to say as to the matter, except that we had known the man to be industrious and capable, and that we had, alas! seen him utterly prostrated by drink on the evening before his death.

The saddest sight of all on this occasion was the appearance of Mackenzie's wife,—whom we had never before seen. She had been brought there by a policeman, but whether she was still in custody we did not know. She had been dressed, either by the decency of the police or by the care of her neighbours, in an old black gown, which was a world too large and too long for her. And on her head there was a black bonnet which nearly enveloped her. She was a small woman, and, as far as we could judge from the glance we got of her face, pale, and worn, and wan. She had not such outward marks of a drunkard's career as those which poor Mackenzie always carried with him. She was taken up to the coroner, and what answers she gave to him were spoken in so low a voice that they did not reach us. The policeman, with whom we spoke, told us that she did not feel it much,—that she was callous now and beyond the power of mental suffering. "She's frightened just this minute, sir; but it isn't more than that," said the policeman. We gave one glance along the table at the burden which it bore, but we saw nothing

beyond the outward lines of that which had so lately been the figure of a man. We should have liked to see the countenance once more. The morbid curiosity to see such horrid sights is strong with most of us. But we did not wish to be thought to wish to see it,—especially by our friend the Doctor,—and we abstained from pushing our way to the head of the table. The Doctor himself remained quiescent in the corner of the room the farthest from the spectacle. When the matter was submitted to them, the jury lost not a moment in declaring their verdict. They said that the man had destroyed himself while suffering under temporary insanity produced by intoxication. And that was the end of Julius Mackenzie, the scholar.

On the following day the Doctor returned to the country, taking with him our black box, to the continued use of which, as a sarcophagus, he had been made very welcome. For our share in bringing upon him the great catastrophe of his life, he never uttered to us, either by spoken or written word, a single reproach. That idea of suffering as the great philosopher had suffered seemed to comfort him. "If Newton bore it, surely I can," he said to us, with his bland smile, when we renewed the expression of our regret. Something passed between us, coming more from us than from him, as to the expediency of finding out some youthful scholar who could go down to the rectory, and reconstruct from its ruins the edifice of our friend's learning. The Doctor had given us some encouragement, and we had begun to make inquiry, when we received the following letter ;—

" ——— Rectory, ———, 18—.

"Dear Mr. ———,—You were so kind as to say that you would endeavour to find for me an assistant in arranging and reconstructing the fragments of my work on *The Metres of the Greek Dramatists*. Your promise has been an additional kindness." Dear, courteous, kind old gentleman! For we knew well that no slightest sting of sarcasm was intended to be conveyed in these words. "Your promise has been an additional kindness; but looking upon the matter carefully, and giving to it the best consideration in my power, I have determined to relinquish the design. That which has been destroyed cannot be replaced; and it may well be that it was not worth replacing. I am old now, and never could do again that which perhaps I was never fitted to do with any fair prospect of success. I will never turn again to the ashes of my unborn child; but will console myself with the memory of my grievance, knowing well, as I do so, that consolation from the severity of harsh but just criticism might have been more difficult to find. When I think of the end of my efforts as a scholar, my mind reverts to the terrible and fatal catastrophe of one whose scholarship was infinitely more finished and more ripe than mine.

"Whenever it may suit you to come into this part of the country, pray remember that it will give very great pleasure to myself and to my daughter to welcome you at our parsonage.

"Believe me to be,

"My dear Mr. —,

"Yours very sincerely,

"— —."

We never have found the time to accept the Doctor's invitation, and our eyes have never again rested on the black box containing the ashes of the unborn child to which the Doctor will never turn again. We can picture him to ourselves standing, full of thought, with his hand upon the lid, but never venturing to turn the lock. Indeed we do not doubt but that the key of the box is put away among other secret treasures, a lock of his wife's hair, perhaps, and the little shoe of the boy who did not live long enough to stand at his father's knee. For a tender, soft-hearted man was the Doctor, and one who fed much on the memories of the past.

We often called upon Mr. and Mrs. Grimes at the Spotted Dog, and would sit there talking of Mackenzie and his family. The woman soon vanished out of the neighbourhood, and no one there knew what was the fate of her or of her children. And then also Mr. Grimes went and took his wife with him. But they could not be said to vanish. Scratching his head one day, he told me with a dolorous voice that he had—made his fortune. "We've got as snug a little place as ever you see, just two mile out of Colchester," said Mrs. Grimes, triumphantly,—“with thirty acres of land just to amuse John. And as for the Spotted Dog, I'm that sick of it, another year'd wear me to a dry bone.” We looked at her, and saw no tendency that way. And we looked at John, and thought that he was not triumphant.

Who followed Mr. and Mrs. Grimes at the Spotted Dog we have never visited Lignorpond Street to see.

SOLDIERS' WIVES.

BY A PRIVATE DRAGOON.

IN our regimental library I am unable to find any information as to whether the wives of Roman soldiers dwelt in the *Prætorium*, the *Castrum*, or the *Vallum*. Nor have I been more successful in gathering any details as to the early history of the wife of the British soldier,—when she first became a recognised institution in the service, and what was the nature of the first privileges accorded to her. I requested a friend in London to make some inquiry on the subject at head-quarters, but the result was by no means encouraging. He went first to the War Office, whence they sent him to the Horse Guards. But the Horse Guards “did not know,—you know,” and so he came empty away. So I leave to some one else, with better opportunities, the task of dealing with the historical part of the subject, and with no affectation of regret because of the narrowing of my bounds, I will confine myself to narrating what has come under my own observation since I joined her Majesty’s service, with respect to the condition, habits, morality, and manner of life generally of the private soldier’s wife.

When I first became a unit in the muster-roll of Britain’s defenders, the women of the regiment who were married with leave,—technically, “on the strength,”—lived, without exception, in the barrack-room among the men. There were commonly a married couple in each room. To them, through long consuetude, was assigned the corner farthest from the door. No matter what their number in family might be, they were allowed but two single bedsteads, and two men’s room. No privacy of any kind was afforded them, save what they could contrive for themselves; and the married soldier was wont to rig up around his matrimonial bower an environment of canvas screening, something over six feet high, and enclosing a very little domain of floor-space in addition to that occupied by the two beds, placed together. In most regiments the “woman of the room” cooked for the room at the fire-place therein, in return for which office it was customary for a “mess” to be cut for her out of the men’s rations: for in the days of which I am speaking married couples were entitled to no rations,—this arrangement is one of the beneficent outcomes of the commissariat system. The married man was put out of mess, and he had wherewithal to maintain himself and his family nothing save his bare pay, in addition to anything that the wife

might earn. The very idea of a married couple living and sleeping in a common room with a dozen or more of single men, partitioned off but by a flimsy curtain, is outrageously repulsive to our sense of decency. When I look back I am struck with wonderment that the arrangement should have been left uninterfered with so long. When the soldier got married in those times he strained every effort, it is true, gradually to acclimatise his wife to the barrack-room, fresh as she was, in many cases, from a quiet country cottage, or from service in a decent family. He was wont to take lodgings outside for the first week of the married life, so that at least the earliest quarter of the honeymoon should be invested with some of the sacred privacy of which there was to be so little afterwards. But I have seen a pure girl brought straight from the church to the barrack-room corner, and the tremor of mortal shame that overwhelmed her. It wore off, as most things of the kind mercifully do wear off, under exposure to the chafe of custom and necessity; but the bride's blushes for herself fell to be renewed at an after period on the tanned cheek of the mother. Children were not, indeed, born in the corner; the woman, when her time was near at hand, was removed to lodgings outside, where, at her husband's expense, she tarried till her recovery; but in the corner daughters grew from childhood to girlhood, with but the screen between them and the men outside. When a daughter fell out of place, all the home she had to come to was the corner; and I have more than once known of grown women sleeping therein, on the top of the chest, alongside the bed of their parents. When the family was large, living, or at all events sleeping, in the corner was little better than pigging, strictly limited as the authorised sleeping accommodation was to the two narrow regulation bedsteads. The woman used to dispose of her boys in the vacant beds of soldiers who were on duty; but in the case of girls there was nothing for it but close-packing behind the screen. Bad as all this was,—disgusting in theory, and repulsive, in many respects, in practice, there were in it, strange as it may seem, some compensatory elements of good. Although the woman had to reconcile herself, with what contentment she might, to a life that perpetually violated the instincts of womanhood, she simply became blunted, not degraded. In proportion as she lived in public, she felt herself amenable to public opinion as represented by the little world of her room; and lowly as her sphere was, and rough as too often became her manners and speech, underneath the skin-deep blemishes there lay self-respect and discretion. She would take her share of a gallon of porter at the common table, but she durst not get drunk, conscious as she was of the critics of her conduct around her. And she made the barrack-room more of a home,—of a family circle,—than it is to-day. The men of her room looked upon her in some such light as they would upon a sister keeping house for them. On a change of quarters they always struggled hard to keep their coterie

together, with the same woman for its presiding genius. She humanised the barrack-room with the sacred influence of her true, if somewhat rough womanhood. There was far less profanity among the men then than there is now; and that obscenity of habitual expression which must startle and shock any visitor to the barrack-room of to-day, was unknown then, quelled wholly by the woman within hearing. Ruffians there were in the service then as there are now, and an outbreak of foul language sometimes came from the lips of one of them. But he was sternly put down and silenced; if a hint from an old soldier, and the finger pointed toward the screen did not suffice, a straight right-hander formed a ready and very convincing argument. The woman was a kindly, motherly soul to the forlorn "cruitie," and would cheer him up with homely words of encouragement as he sat on his bed-iron mopingly thinking of home. She was always obliging if you entreated her civilly, whether to sew on a button or lend a shilling. If she was anything of a scholar, to her fell the office of letter-writer-general for the fellows whose penmanship had been neglected in early days, and thus she became the repository of not a few confidences, which she scorned to violate. Sometimes, as an especial favour, she would allow a man to bring his sweetheart on a Sunday afternoon to a modest tea within the screen in the corner; and if friends came from a distance to see one of "her men," the married woman was always ready to do her best for the credit's sake of the hospitality of her room. I am sure that fewer scandals were current in those days about married women than there are now, and I question much whether, accepting the roughness of the husk as a necessary outcome of their situation, the women who dwelt in the corners were not more genuine at the core than are the ladies who now inhabit the married quarters. Besides the evils I have alluded to, there was another connected with the position of the former that must not be forgotten. Soldiers are very fond of children, but are apt to look upon them in the light rather of monkeys than of creatures with souls in their little bodies. So the imps grew up tutored in all manner of tricks,—developing a weird precocity in tossing off a basin full of porter and smoking the blackest of pipes, and using not the most choice language. Mostly they went either into the band of the regiment, or into one of the military schools; and thus, under the old long service régime, the country had an hereditary soldiery, not a few of whom, born at the foot of the regimental ladder, have climbed up it no inconsiderable distance.

In the days I now speak of, there were few railways save some of the great trunk lines. When a regiment went on the line of march, the women rode on the accompanying baggage-waggons, with their brats stowed away in odd corners among the other miscellaneous goods and chattels, and went to their husband's billet, if the people were willing to admit them—as, to their credit, they mostly were.

When they were not, the husband had to find lodgings for his wife somewhere else, and when the funds were low, I have often known women to be smuggled into the hay-loft above the troop-horses, and sometimes even to bivouac on the lee-side of a hedge. To some extent the railways entailed an additional charge on the married soldier's slender purse. He had always had to pay for his baggage; for the chest or two, the feather bed,—if the couple had got that length in prosperity,—and the few feminine belongings which the wife could call her own; but now the husband had to pay for the warrant under which his wife and family were conveyed by rail. Within the last ten years, however, "baggage-funds" have been formed in most regiments, the proceeds of which go far to meet the travelling charges of the women and children of the regiment. In the days I refer to, if women had to live outside the barracks because of want of room inside, there was no allowance in the shape of lodging money. The first grant of this was made, I think, in 1852, and consisted of one penny a day, paid quarterly. It was gradually increased, till now I believe the allowance is fourpence per day.

This may be taken as a rough epitome of the condition of the soldier's wife up till the end of 1848, or the beginning of 1849. About that period, I think through some troubles in the financial world, an exceptional number of better-class men joined the service, and struck with the indecency of the arrangement then in force, not a few sent in anonymous complaints to the Horse Guards; others, through the press, stimulated public opinion to demand a change, and the authorities sluggishly complied. The reform was not carried through with any great promptitude, for I have heard of women living in the barrack-rooms after the Crimean war. But the change was made in the regiment to which I belong in the year 1849. It was no great change for the better. Into one attic in Christchurch Barracks seven families were huddled pell-mell. No more arrangements for privacy were made than had existed in the common barrack-rooms. Each separate ménage was curtained off by what may be styled private enterprise. There was but one fire-place in the room, and the women squabbled vehemently over their turns for cooking, and were forced to have recourse to the fires in the men's barrack-rooms. The moral and social tone was visibly deteriorated under this arrangement below that which had characterised the common barrack-room. The women, congregated as they were, and with no check upon them, were too prone to club for gin, and conviviality was chequered with quarrels, into which the husbands were not unfrequently drawn. There was a perceptible growth of coarseness of tone among both the women and the men, that became actual grossness; and I question if a young woman, with some of Nature's modesty clinging to her, did not have it more violently outraged in this congeries of married couples than would have been

the case in the old corner-of-the-barrack-room arrangement. Of this at least I am certain, that with ominous rapidity she learnt to talk, and would submit to be jeered, on subjects which were ignored under the old system. The over-crowding also, which was all but universal, was physically injurious to both adults and children. The latter did not count in allocating quarters. I have known ten families in one long room in Weedon Barracks. Eight families in a hut in the North Camp at Aldershot was nothing uncommon. But a better régime is now rapidly obtaining. There are few barracks now which do not contain married quarters; where each couple have a room to themselves. I know not whether the inception of this new system was due to our gracious Queen, but the rapidity with which married quarters have become all but universal is certainly owing in the main to her womanly sympathy with her sex. Still, however, these married quarters in many cases do not afford sufficient accommodation, and the surplusage have to fall back on the old system. The summer before last, in Aldershot, more than one troop-room was occupied by four families, and as I write, I doubt not that about a third of the married strength of the home forces are still unaccommodated with separate rooms. In civilian estimation a single room for a man and wife and their family,—day-room and bed-room in one,—seems no great boon; but the soldier and his wife have been so little used to mercies of any kind, that they are thankful for very small ones. Yet a second room, if not for the married private, at least for the non-commissioned officer of the higher grade, might with advantage be conceded. A squadron sergeant-major is a non-commissioned aristocrat; his position in the military cosmogony being roughly analogous to the managing foreman of a factory in the civilian world. But how would the latter relish having to pay his hands, the head of the concern sitting with him at the pay-table, while his recently-confined wife lay in bed in the same room, sequestered only by a curtain?

The soldier does not very often go to his own home for a wife. He forgets the sweetheart of his pre-soldiering days, and finds another where he may chance to be quartered. Most soldiers' wives have been servant-girls, with whom the *militaire* has picked acquaintance casually in his evening strolls. But there are many exceptions, and some of these of rather a sensational kind. I once knew a soldier's wife who had been a clergyman's daughter, another who had been a vocalist at a leading music-hall, and a third who had been the widow of a captain in the navy. Since the relaxation in the rigour exercised in regard to marriages without leave,—which I shall presently have occasion to advert,—soldiers have more and more taken to marrying prostitutes. Repulsive as such a connection is, fairness demands the admission that these women, with very few exceptions, turn out well-conducted wives. I suppose they are so weary of their

previous life, that to be a wife at all, no matter how humble is the sphere, is a coveted haven of refuge too deeply appreciated to be lightly forfeited. At all events, the fact is as I state. So prone are soldiers to take their wives from among the daughters of the land in which they may be stationed, that an experienced hand can map out by the different strata, so to speak, of married womanhood in a regiment, the track of its journeyings from district to district. Let me give an example from my own regiment. The mothers of the corps are south of England women,—Christchurch and Brighton extracts, decently inclined, self-respecting, rather masculine dames, who have followed the kettle-drums many a year, and got tanned and travel-worn, but honest, cleanly, blunt of speech, but fairly pure of heart. Then comes a layer of canny Scotch lasses picked up during a tour in the north country, clannish to the last degree, grasping, and greedy most of them; "wearing the breeches" as regards their "gudemen," but good wives, nevertheless, and excellent mothers; fond of a "drappie," when somebody else pays for it, mostly with a nest-egg in the regimental savings-bank, and willing to do a little bit of usury on the quiet, very unpopular with the other women, horribly quarrelsome, and scrupulously clean. Then comes a miscellaneous infusion of the Irish element, resulting from the corps having been stationed for several years in various parts of the sister isle. Irishwomen, with few exceptions, do not make good soldiers' wives. They are too ready to accommodate themselves to circumstances, instead of striving to make circumstances bend to them; thus in the unfavourable phase of life in which they find themselves through marrying a soldier, they are prone to go with the swim, to become careless and slatternly, to say, "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," and to be heedless if to-morrow's pot portends emptiness so long as to-day's "boils fat."

When the soldier falls a prey to matrimonial longings, he obtains an interview with his colonel in the orderly-room, and formally asks permission to get married. If he has any length of service and a good character, permission is grudgingly given him, subject to the occurrence of a vacancy in his squadron or company. If he is a sensible man he waits for this, and then his wife is at once taken on the strength, and is entitled to her share of the privileges that are going. A certain number of men, commonly the inmates of one room, are assigned her to "do for." She washes the weekly budget of very dirty clothes, and in most cavalry regiments she still has the task of keeping the room clean. She scrubs it over daily, keeps the tables and forms in a snow-white state, washes the crockeryware after each meal, and generally has to satisfy the captain as to the cleanliness of the apartment. In other cavalry regiments the men perform these functions in rotation, and the woman has merely the washing to do. In either case each of her men pay her a penny a

day. The charge in infantry regiments is but a halfpenny, and there the men are invariably their own housemaids. In some regiments of the latter branch of the service, the married women are prohibited altogether from entering the barrack-rooms. Those women who do not have a certain number of men assigned them, look after an officer apiece, at the remuneration of a shilling a day; but this is an employment which falls chiefly to the wives of non-commissioned officers. The husband, for his part, does his best to contribute to the exchequer. Sometimes he is detailed as an officer's servant, an office which brings him in 10s. or 15s. per month, besides pickings; or if he is not lucky enough for this, he may undertake the care of a sergeant's horse, for which he gets 10s. per month. In all I reckon the weekly income of a couple in a cavalry regiment, when the husband is earning his 10s. per month in addition to his pay, and the wife is making a shilling a day, to amount to about a guinea a week. No bad income when it is remembered that no rent comes out of it, and that the husband has hardly any clothing to pay for. An additional privilege is the right to draw one ration of three-quarters of a pound of meat and one pound of bread for 4½d., about one-half the price retail in the open market. Till lately two rations were allowed to be drawn, but this has been stopped for reasons of economy. I know of no deduction from the above estimate save barrack damages, and the recently-imposed halfpenny per day for bedding, if its exaction be persisted in.

The soldier's wife is commonly an utter heathen as regards religion, unless she is a Roman Catholic, and then she is no less a heathen for the dash of superstition. She cannot go to the garrison church in the forenoon because of her barrack-room and domestic duties, and it is very seldom she ever goes to church at all. With the exception of one or two stations, to the chaplains of which all honour is due, she seldom or never receives a clerical visit. The chaplain mostly seems to consider that when he does his pulpit work he earns his pay, and I suppose the civilian minister shuns the barracks lest he should be thought to be poaching on the chaplain's domain. I might be permitted to suggest to well-intentioned ladies in towns where there are barracks what an excellent field lies fallow in the married quarters for judicious cultivation. One of the greatest evils of a married woman's lot in the army is her isolation from humanising civilian influences. So precarious is her term of residence anywhere that she soon ceases any effort to cultivate acquaintance outside the barrack-gate, and if she would not be utterly companionless she must fall back upon her sisters of the regiment for society. She is none the better for the defiant pariah-feeling that this concentration is apt to engender.

Hitherto I have been writing of soldiers' wives who have become so in a strictly constitutional and regimental manner. But for one soldier who marries "with leave," at least half a dozen marry with-

out leave. Sometimes a man applies for leave, which is either refused or postponed; in the majority of cases circumstances render the formality of asking leave a needless farce, and he marries without troubling to go through it. Rules affecting men married without leave vary according to the dispositions,—severe or lenient,—of commanding officers. In my early soldiering days I knew a man who had been married for twenty years, a man with an excellent character, and holding non-commissioned rank, whose wife was never taken on the strength of the regiment at all, because the marriage had been without leave. In some regiments a probation, or rather a purgatory, of eight years had to be undergone before the offence of getting married without permission was condoned, and the wife admitted to privileges. Of late years a more lenient policy has come into operation. A suitable applicant is permitted to marry at once, with the promise that his wife will be taken "on the strength" in rotation, and meanwhile a little work is assigned her to ease the hardship of her lot. Prior to this it was usual for the soldier and his wife to be married twice over, the second marriage taking place when leave was granted, in order to meet the necessity of the registration of the marriage lines in the orderly-room, when the production of the record of the first marriage would have exposed the disobedience of orders, and led to a retraction of the permission. I remember a critical legitimacy question once arising out of a double marriage of this kind. To get married without leave, even although it be accompanied by no other infraction of discipline, is a military crime coming under the head of disobedience of orders, and I have known a man severely punished for the offence. But most frequently marriage without leave is aggravated by the crime of concurrent absence, and the offender is punished nominally for the latter, but in reality for the other also. Thus I have known a man get seven days' cells, involving the loss of his hair, for a couple of hours' absence in the morning for the purpose of getting married. It is not pleasant, it must be confessed, to meet your bride with not so much hair on your head as would supply a locket. Not unfrequently, in the stern wrath of the commanding officer, the woman's name "is put on the gate," *i.e.*, she is prohibited from entering the barracks. Her plight is a very sad one. She has left her place or her father's home, and it is with her "*nulla vestigia retrorsum*." She lingers wistfully about the barrack-gate, pitifully asking the men as they walk out what punishment her husband has got, and when it will be over. She gets a room somewhere near the barracks, and her husband half starves himself that he may share his food with her, and his mates cut him the bigger mess when they know that it has to feed two mouths. It is seldom that this self-deniant method of feeding a wife is interfered with. The only instance which occurs to me occurred some years ago at Belfast, by order of Colonel Hobbs, of Jamaica mutiny notoriety, the harshest discipli-

narian I have ever known. With but few exceptions the man acts very loyally by the woman with whom he has rashly formed a union. Sometimes, it is true, things do go wrong. The woman gives up the hard battle in despair, and enters on a more wretched campaign still, with sure defeat as its inevitable ghastly close; or the husband rebels against the necessary self-denial, and shirks his responsibility. But much oftener the twain cling together with a piteous yet a proud devotion. The compassionate matrons who are on the strength give the woman a turn on washing days, or she picks up some employment about the officers' mess kitchen, or among the non-commissioned officers' wives. A change of station is a heavy blow to the struggling couple. There is no "warrant" for the woman married without leave, and it is not often that her husband can compass the railway fare. I have known a woman foot it all the way from Aldershot to Edinburgh, marching day for day with her husband's troop, sometimes getting into his billet at night, but oftener located in the hay-loft. Long ere she crossed Kelso Bridge, her boots had given out; but her heart was tougher than her boots, and she triumphantly reached Jock's Lodge only a few hours behind her husband. Shorter journeys of this kind are common enough, not only with soldiers' wives, but with females who have no such tie with the men they follow. A time sometimes comes, however, to the woman married without leave when her courage is of no avail,—when the regiment is ordered on foreign service, and she is left straining her eyes through bitter, hopeless tears after the receding troop-ship. Now she is, indeed, alone in the world. But she turns instinctively barrackward,—there is consolation, seemingly, in the colour of the cloth. There is hardly a barrack of any size in the kingdom where there are not, as hangers-on, some of these compulsory grass-widows, picking a precarious livelihood by the merciful consideration of soldiers' wives better circumstanced. Such an one, as she wrestles single-handed with the world, is counting longingly the years and the months till her husband's term of service shall expire. It may be that one day a letter arrives from a chum, or a discharged soldier of her husband's regiment strolls into barracks with the tidings that Bill or Joe is dead of cholera at some unhealthy inland station, or that fever took him off in some forced march through the jungle. But, again, Bill or Joe is back himself with his discharge in his pocket and love in his heart, and the horizon becomes very rosy to the poor barrack-drudge. But such a case as I have pictured is rarer since the relaxation in the stringency of the rules, the details of which are given above.

I would fain, for the credit of my cloth, correct a prevalent impression that the soldier is an habitual bigamist,—that, as the saying goes, "he has a wife in every town he lies in." His morality is blunt enough, but he seldom perpetrates more than one marriage. Indeed, were he so inclined, he would find that luxury dashed by dis-

agreeable consequences. The woman once married to a soldier is not to be shaken off by any such trifle as a change of station. She will track him like a blood-hound, and one day the inevitable message is sure to reach him from the gate that he is "wanted," by his wife persistent, if unwelcome. The woman married to a soldier who wishes to evade his obligations has struck me as resembling that well-known institution, "the guard-room dog,"—an animal of a resolute turn of mind,—the more he is turned out the more he is determined to come in. You can't lose him; he won't starve; tin-kettles attached to his tail are of no avail; kicks, buffets, and scorn are alike unheeded by him, till at length, through sheer force of persistency, he makes good his position, and establishes his right to inhabit the guard-room, and to the reversion of the scraps.

SONNET.

GOOD OLD SAXON.

I LOVE the racy English of old times,
 Before its Latin softness o'er it crept,
 When mighty scalds were valiant in their rhymes,
 Nor tamely o'er the tinkling harp-strings swept,
 As though the spirit of their fathers slept,
 Or spoke in vowelled whispers among limes.
 Our native rough-hewn words are less inept
 Than daintier speech flung off in silver chimes.
 Our tongue should have a likeness to the land,—
 A smack of crag and torrent, tarn and glen,—
 In nouns and verbs that shepherds understand,
 Meet for the use of hardy fighting men,
 Brief and sonorous, till we seem to stand
 And hear brave Geoffrey Chaucer rhyme again.

COLOURS OF THE PLANETS.

It is not commonly known that when the celestial depths are scanned with instruments of adequate power, a variety of beautiful and well-marked colours can be recognised. Amongst the fixed stars, indeed, there is scarcely a tint missing from the full scale of the prismatic colours, while a variety of hues not belonging to that scale,—as grey, lilac, fawn-coloured, and buff,—may be seen among the members of those multiple systems of stars which form so interesting a subject of study to the telescopist. But the planets are the only objects in the heavens which are actually variegated in colour—that is, which present, side by side and in actual contact, streaks and patches of differently coloured surface. It is, indeed, only recently that the diversities of tint thus presented have been recognised to their full extent. The observation of colours so delicate as those we refer to, or rather of colours which, however well-marked in reality, are so easily lost sight of through the effects of the enormous distances separating us from these outer worlds, is one of extreme difficulty. It is only under very favourable circumstances that the colours can be seen at all; and the mode of observation which alone serves to exhibit them is altogether different from that which is best calculated to reveal other planetary features. The results which have rewarded some recent studies, specially directed to the detection of colour, are so interesting and instructive, that we need offer no excuse for presenting them at some length. It is precisely such studies as these, apparently directed to trivial relations, which, when carefully weighed, have been found to afford the most suggestive evidence respecting the economy of the solar system.

It may not be amiss to give some account, in the first place, of the colours which the planets exhibit to the unaided eye. These colours, though not in all cases very marked, are quite sufficient to enable any one to distinguish one planet from another. Jupiter, to the naked eye, appears perfectly white. His brilliancy so far surpasses that of any fixed star, that there is no mistaking him when he is shining in full glory on the dark background of the midnight sky. But when he is an evening or a morning star, he may be mistaken for Venus. To distinguish between the two it should be noticed that Venus is much the more brilliant under such circumstances, while her light is somewhat less snowily white. The peculiar creamy white of the planet of love, can never be mistaken by those who have once had

their attention attracted to it. Mercury cannot be mistaken for either of the two other white planets. Owing to his proximity to the sun, he shines with a peculiar sparkling light which distinguishes him from every other object in the heavens. The ancients, accordingly, called this little planet "the sparkler." When seen side by side with Jupiter or Venus, the inferiority of his light,—in quantity,—is as remarkable as its singular intrinsic brilliancy.

Mars and Saturn, however, are the two planets whose colours, as seen by the naked eye, are the most readily distinguishable. The former shines with an unmistakably ruddy light, which acquired for it among the Greeks the title of *πυρόεις*, the Fiery One. Sometimes this colour is more marked than at others, and it used to be thought that the difference was caused by changes in our own atmosphere. This idea has now, however, been shown to be a mistaken one, and astronomers recognise in the strange variations of colour presented by this interesting object, the occurrence of changes taking place on the planet itself. He has been known to shine with so deep and ominous a hue that popular fears have pictured him as some new orb sent to forewarn mankind of strife and bloodshed.

Saturn shines with a dull yellow, and somewhat dismal, hue, a circumstance which, taken in combination with his sluggish motions, may be held to account for the gloomy auguries which the astrologers drew in old times from the "predominance" of this planet. Our readers may remember, for instance, the lines of Chaucer, in which, with a strange mixture of mythological and astrological lore, he describes the malevolent influence of the yellow planet. Saturn,—the god, be it remembered,—is addressing Venus, and thus assumes to himself the qualities ascribed to the planet:—

"My dere daughter Venus, quod Saturne,
My cours, that hath so wide for to turne
Hath more power than wot any man.
Min is the drenching in the see so wan,
Min is the prison in the derke cote,
Min is the strangel, and hanging by the throte,
The murmure and the cherles rebelling.
The groyning, and the prive empoysoning.
I do vengeance and pleine correction,
While I dwell in the signe of the Leon.
Min is the ruine of the high halles,
The falling of the toures and of the walles
Upon the minour or the carpenter:
I slew Samson in shaking the piler.
Min ben also the maladies colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde:
My loking is the fader of pestilence."

All evils, in fact, to which the human race is subject, save only open war,—which was the property of fiery Mars,—were fathered upon

the planet which astronomers now recognise as the most beautiful of all the celestial objects.

We turn, however, to the peculiarities of colour which the telescope has revealed in several of the principal planets.

It is impossible to observe either Venus or Mercury under circumstances favourable for the detection of colour. And, indeed, the brilliancy of both these planets is so great that to observe them properly coloured glasses must be commonly used; and it need hardly be said that no dependence could be placed on indications of colour presented through such a medium. It may be remarked, however, in passing, that grey and reddish patches of light have been seen by some observers on the dark part of these planets, a circumstance which has been referred to the probable occurrence of auroral displays in these distant orbs. If we were to accept this conclusion, and it is far from being improbable, we should be led to infer that the auroras which are to be witnessed by the inhabitants of Mercury and Venus must be much more splendid than any which have ever been visible on our own earth. For certainly the brightest auroral displays ever seen by man, could not possibly be discernible by the inhabitants of other worlds. We know that the flashes of the aurora can no longer be traced as the day begins to dawn; and we may therefore assume with confidence that an observer who should see our earth as we commonly see Venus, with a part of its surface in the full light of the sun, and a part in darkness, would be prevented by the brilliancy of the illuminated part from discerning the faint light of an auroral display in progress on the darker part. But physicists have learnt to associate auroras with solar action, and therefore it may well be that on Venus and Mercury, which are so much nearer to the sun than the earth is, auroral phenomena may be exhibited with enhanced splendour.

It is when we pass beyond the bounds of the earth's orbit that we obtain the first well-marked indications of colour in the planetary system.

Mars stands prominent among the planets for the distinctness and variety of the colours which his disc exhibits. When a telescope of adequate power is turned towards this miniature world, we are struck in the first place by the singular brilliancy of the two white spots, which have long since been recognised as "the snowy poles of moonless Mars." They stand out so conspicuously from the rest of the disc, that often when a mist passes over the surface of the planet, they may be distinctly recognised, like two faint stars, while all the rest of the planet is totally hidden from view.

Next we notice the delicately-tinted border of white light which surrounds the rest of the disc, and forms a sort of frame, within which the true features of the planet's surface are to be recognised. This border is supposed to be due to light cumulus clouds in the Martial atmosphere. Such clouds, if formed like those in our own

air, would only become perceptible to us where, through the effect of foreshortening near the edge of the disc, they were crowded together—in appearance—and thus concealed the true surface of the planet from our view. Occasionally they exhibit a greenish tint of exquisite delicacy.

But it is within this boundary that the true colours of Mars are to be seen. The body of the planet, or what may be assumed to be its true surface, is of a ruddy or ochreish tint, here and there somewhat yellowish. There are also to be seen occasionally spots of salmon-coloured light, brownish patches, and even black spots of small size. We may not unreasonably look upon all these portions of the planet as consisting of earthy substances, resembling those which constitute our own lands and continents. Next, covering an extent of the disc very little less than that occupied by the ruddy regions, we have spaces which some observers consider to be green, while to others they appear of an indigo-grey or neutral colour. Like the red parts, the greyish or greenish spaces are not uniformly dark. In some places they are so faintly tinted as to appear almost white; in others they seem tinged with a purplish hue. We cannot doubt that these portions are in reality seas, and not fresh-water seas, but seas like our own, coloured by the salts which they contain. The varieties of colour correspond indeed quite closely with those observed in our own oceans, from the light-green hues of the polar seas, to that strange deep hue which Homer has described as “wine-coloured.”

A French astronomer was led by the singular contrasts of colour observable on Mars to form a very strange theory respecting the physical conditions which prevail upon his surface. Noticing that the ruddy tints always appear most clearly during the Martial summer, he came to the conclusion that vegetation is of a different nature on Mars than on our own earth. In place of green leaves the trees on that distant world put forth red leaves, he argued; as spring progresses, the fields recover from the effects of the long Martial winter, but in place of what we term verdure they are clothed with rubescence. If this theory be true, the Martial poets might say of spring, more truthfully than our own have done, that

“She cometh, blushing like a maid.”

But we have no great reason for supposing that the theory is true. Certainly our earth would not appear green if her continents could be viewed from afar off, as we see Mars. Nay, even our forests, supposing them large enough to be separately visible, would scarcely exhibit a discernible green tint. A very eminent landscape-painter used to deride the notion that trees are green; “leaves are green, if you will,” he used to say, “but trees,—they are any colour but green; black, white, yellow, red, but never green.” And, making

allowance for the requirements of paradox, the assertion is not far from the truth. No one ever saw out of a picture-book, and that a bad one, a really green forest. And by parity of reasoning we may assume that if vegetation on Mars were red, yet seen in large masses the red tints would be lost.

The fact seems to be that we have a reasonable explanation of the ruddy tint of the Martial continents in the fact that the principal part of the soil of the planet resembles those red and ochreish soils which appear in various parts of our own earth. A geologist may suppose, if he will, that the Martialists are passing through the old Red Sandstone period; and possibly some thousands of years hence observers of Mars may see with wonder the signs of a soil wholly different from that now visible to us.

When we turn to the planet Jupiter, we are struck with the immense contrast he presents to Mars, not merely in the arrangement of the colours which tint his disc, but in every feature. Mars is one of the least of the planets, much less, in fact, than our own earth. Jupiter is thirteen hundred times larger than the globe we live on. Mars has a day only half an hour or so longer than ours. Jupiter's day lasts but nine or ten hours. Mars is without attendants. Jupiter has four noble satellites, each scarcely inferior to the planet Mercury.

When Jupiter is observed under ordinary circumstances, we can detect scarcely any signs of colour. But no one who has ever seen Jupiter in a powerful telescope, under really favourable atmospheric conditions, can fail to be struck with the wonderful splendour of his colouring. One need not be an enthusiast in matters astronomical to be so enchanted with the spectacle as to find it almost impossible to leave the telescope. A friend of ours, who rejoices in a noble equatorial, accurately driven by clock-work, so as to keep an object always in view, finds that on such a night as we have described, the friends whom he invites occasionally to enjoy the glories of the heavens, will take no hint to limit their enjoyment of the spectacle. "I have nothing for it, as a rule," he complains, "but to stop the clock, so that Jupiter withdraws himself from their too eager gaze."

And now to describe the colours of the noble planet. The poles are of a singularly beautiful colour, resembling what is termed by painters ultramarine-ash. What is sometimes called the body of Jupiter as distinguished from the dark belts, which are doubtless, however, the true surface of the planet, is of a rich creamy white, slightly less brilliant, near the edge of the disc. No one can doubt that we look here upon the "silver linings" of clouds suspended in the deep atmosphere of the giant planet. It is the dark belts which exhibit the most remarkable colouring. Those nearest to the grey-blue poles are slate-coloured. Somewhat farther from the poles a

tinge of red is discernible in the grey. In fact, we have a realisation of the gris-rouge colour which amuses us in Molière's comedy. Still farther from the poles the belts appear of a delicate chocolate colour, somewhat ruddy; while the two dark belts on either side of the great equatorial bright zone exhibit an appearance as though light of a singularly beautiful garnet hue were shining through a chocolate-tinted medium.

But the most remarkable circumstance in connection with the colouring of Jupiter remains to be mentioned. The bright equatorial belt, usually white, has recently been observed to exhibit the most remarkable peculiarities and variations of colour. Mr. Browning, the optician, using a fine reflector of his own construction, discovered last autumn that the equatorial belt had assumed a greenish-yellow tint. Then later it became of a bright ochreish-yellow. And since the beginning of the present year it has changed through a variety of tints of yellow, ranging from Roman orange to yellow-lake. We shall presently comment further on the significance of this striking series of phenomena.

It remains to be mentioned here that occasionally spots of almost inky blackness can be seen upon the belts of Jupiter. The fact that they are not always visible, shows that, if the belts belong to the real surface of the planet, they must yet be more or less obscured from our view by a veil of vapour. It is only when this vapour is wholly or almost wholly removed from some region, that the black spots we have referred to become visible.

Beautiful as Jupiter is, and grand as is the system which attends upon him, Saturn presents a yet more charming and impressive spectacle to the telescopist. The wonderful ring-system is alone sufficient to render him the most interesting of all the planets. But the scheme of attendant orbs, circling outside the rings, raises Saturn almost to the dignity of a sun. His family of satellites is as large in number as the sun's family of planets, and as the sun, besides his planet family, has a ring of small bodies,—the asteroids,—attending upon him, so Saturn has a yet more compact ring, composed, so say the astronomers, of myriads of minute satellites, circling in ever intertwining orbits around the great centre of the Saturnian system.

Although Saturn is so much farther from us than Jupiter, he presents colours of equal beauty. The chief difference between the planets in this respect, lies in the fact that the belts of Saturn are not dark and rugged like those of Jupiter, but faint and smooth. "This uniformity," says an observer whom we shall presently have occasion to quote more at length, "though it detracts somewhat from the interest with which the belts are examined, adds greatly to the unique beauty of the planet."

Before proceeding to describe the beauties of this most lovely of all the members of the solar system, we must make a few remarks

on the subject of the rings, otherwise our description would seem unintelligible to those who are unfamiliar with the progress of recent discoveries in the Saturnian system.

It had long been known that what is termed for brevity Saturn's ring, is divided by a wide circular gap some two thousand miles across into two concentric rings, of which the inner is the wider and the brighter. More recently it had been discovered that several other divisions exist in the ring-system, of which one, dividing the outer ring almost along the middle of its breadth, appears to be permanent. But these divisions are not black; moreover careful observers had come to the conclusion that even the great dark division is not black. Captain Jacob, an eminent observer, had noticed that when the shadow of the planet falls across this division, the contrast between the intense blackness of the shadow and the merely dark colour of the division was very marked. This showed that some material or other occupied the great division between the rings.

The discovery of a dark ring within the innermost bright one seems less remarkable after this recognition of the fact that the great division is in reality but a darker part of the ring-system. Still the actual proof that such a thing as a dark ring has existence within the bounds of our solar system, cannot but be looked upon as striking. The discovery that where it crosses Saturn the planet can be seen through the dark ring was, however, much more so. It was the first demonstrated case of a transparent substance within the solar scheme,—of a substance, at least, in this sense transparent, that its materials are so arranged that vision through it is possible. We now have reason to believe that the actual matter composing the dark ring is no more transparent than the moon is. It is supposed that minute satellites, somewhat more widely separated than in the case of the bright rings, compose the dark ring also, and that between these satellites we can see through to the planet. The appearance actually presented is as though the dark ring were composed of crape, veiling, but not altogether hiding the planet from us. On this account the ring is often called the crape-ring.

When seen under ordinary circumstances,—that is, when the atmospheric conditions are not unusually favourable,—the only colours which can be recognised on Saturn are the white of the cloud-zones and the yellow of the belts. But on one of those few fine nights which are the delight of the telescopist, we suddenly find the pale faint colours of the distant planet changed into well-marked hues of great distinctness. The following description is from the pen of Mr. Browning, the optician. The observation was made with a fine twelve-inch reflector, by means of which Mr. Browning, in the few leisure hours at his disposal, has already made many important contributions to observational astronomy. Speaking of a coloured drawing which accompanied a paper of his on Saturn in the "*Student*,"

—"The following colours," he says, "were used to represent the parts indicated. The rings, yellow ochre,—shaded with the same,—and sepia. The globe, yellow ochre and brown madder, orange and purple, shaded with sepia. The great division in the rings, sepia,"—not black, be it noticed. "The pole, and the narrow belts situated near it on the globe, pale cobalt-blue."

It will be observed how largely our conceptions of the beauty of the Saturnian scheme are enhanced by the knowledge that colours so varied and so well marked are exhibited on the planet's disc, and in the noble rings which circle around it. But in reality no description, nay no painting, can afford any adequate conception of the planet's exceeding loveliness on such a night as we have mentioned. Mr. Browning's picture is perhaps the most beautiful representation of Saturn which has ever been produced. Yet no one would admit more readily than himself that it conveys but an inadequate idea of the ringed planet when seen in its full glory. "The tints I have used," he says, "are the nearest I could find to those seen on the planet, but there is a muddiness about all terrestrial colours when compared with the colours of the objects seen in the heavens. These colours could not be represented in all their brilliancy and purity, unless we could dip our pencil in a rainbow, and transfer the prismatic tints to our paper."

On account of the heavy masses of clouds which cover Jupiter and Saturn, we only obtain partial and indistinct views of their real surface; it is not easy to form any conception of the arrangement of continents and oceans which may exist upon these planets. There are many of our earths which might be supposed to present some such tints as we see on Saturn and Jupiter, if only our planet could be viewed under somewhat similar circumstances. But there are some difficulties which it is not very easy to get over. It is certain that whenever we get a real glimpse of the Saturnian and Jovian surfaces we see various shades of brown, red, purple, and yellow; nothing,—except near the poles,—which can reasonably be supposed to represent seas or oceans. But we are compelled to believe that there must be seas and oceans elsewhere than near the poles. For the great equatorial white belts which surround both planets must consist of masses of cloud or mist, raised by evaporation from widely-expanded oceans. Yet, as we have said, there is no trace on the ruddy, dark belts near the equator of any oceanic masses existing in the neighbourhood of the equator.

Another circumstance very difficult to comprehend is the existence of the vaporous masses which form the cloud-belts. Jupiter and Saturn are so much farther from the sun than we are that one would imagine the solar rays would scarcely be able to evaporate such enormous quantities of water as must in reality be held suspended in these cloud-belts,—if they are rightly so called. In the dense atmospheres surrounding Saturn and Jupiter evaporation would require a

much higher temperature than in our own air. And though this same density would tend, as Tyndall and Hopkins have shown, to preserve a higher temperature than would exist were the atmosphere rarer, yet, as Jupiter is more than five times, and Saturn more than nine times, farther from the sun than we are, those planets would require all that effect, and more, to secure for them the same warmth that we enjoy. This warmth would be altogether insufficient to account for the enormous masses of vapour which hang suspended over the two giant planets of the solar scheme.

We believe that when these circumstances are properly weighed, the only conclusion which can be arrived at is, that there exists both in Saturn and Jupiter a vast fund of internal heat.

The enormous volumes of these planets suggested the same view to a thoughtful student of nature of the last century. He argued that our earth still retains a large share of the heat which it had in those far off ages when tropical trees thrived in the arctic regions. Had her mass been much smaller than it is she would have long since parted with nearly all her internal heat. The moon, on the other hand, which is so much smaller than the earth, exhibits signs of refrigeration as obvious as the signs her face presents that she was once the seat of an intensely active heat. We may judge therefore by analogy, he reasoned, that the giant planets, Jupiter and Saturn, retain a far larger share of their original internal heat than our earth does. He even constructed a number of earthen globes, which he heated to a red heat, and then placed in the open air to cool, and he deduced the law according to which globes of different dimensions lose their heat. As might be imagined, the larger globes in all cases retained their heat the longest.

Now without accepting these experiments of the ingenious Buffon as necessarily corresponding with the conditions presented in the solar system, we may yet not unfairly combine their results with those to which we have been led by the consideration of the colours of the two largest planets of the solar system. This being done, the conclusion presents itself as highly probable that the enormous masses of vapour which certainly surround these planets are raised by the action of the planet's internal heat. We might even reverse Dr. Whewell's famous argument against the habitability of Saturn and Jupiter, and deduce the same conclusion from the consideration of the intense heat probably prevailing upon their surface, which he deduced from the theory that these planets probably consist of snow and ice, "with perhaps a cindery nucleus." But if we thus robbed the two noblest planets in the solar system of their inhabitants, it would be to recognise in the satellites which attend upon those orbs the abodes of living creatures, as well provided for, perhaps, as the inhabitants of our own earth.

Leaving these speculations, which our readers may be disposed to

look upon as more fanciful than instructive, we have a few remarks to offer, in conclusion, as to the methods best adapted for observing the colours which have been described above.

It should be noticed, in the first place, that the air must be steady enough to enable the telescopist to use the highest powers his telescope will bear. Contrary to what might be supposed by those unfamiliar with telescopic observation, a rather misty night is commonly to be preferred for observations of colour. And not only must the night be suitable for high powers, but high powers must be used. For most observations, the practised astronomer commonly prefers moderate powers as giving brighter light. But to bring out colour we have to subdue the light as much as possible, otherwise the glare conceals all traces of the delicate tints we wish to detect. Reflectors are, on the whole, much more favourable for the detection of colour than refractors; indeed, the only accounts of Saturn's colours which we can at present recall were published by observers who used reflecting telescopes. They add a slight yellowish tinge to all objects, it is true; but the fact that the blue tint of Saturn's polar regions is clearly perceptible with them shows how little this affects their work. The reason of their superiority doubtless lies in their freedom from what is called the chromatic aberration, that is, the formation of prismatic colours around the image produced by a telescope. With a large instrument, on a good night, and with other circumstances favourable, the observation of the colours of Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter, is one of the most pleasing of all the pleasing sights which the possessor of a good telescope can enjoy.

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

THE time has at length come in the history of literature when objective criticism, moulded in the old forms of thought and prejudice, must yield to the higher force of free and unbiassed judgment. Public opinion has, during the last thirty years, been undergoing a change at once rapid and marvellous. To say that the change has not been subversive of much that was valuable in the eyes of many on the score of antiquity, would be to deny its efficacy. For is it not the chief boast of such a revolution, that a mental republic has been formed which dares to handle matters, the most necessary and important for the welfare of society, in a manner freed from the thralldom and restraint of a too narrow conventionality? In this country, perhaps, the effects of such an intellectual movement are not perhaps so striking as elsewhere. Englishmen have always exercised a certain freedom of thought and expression from the times when the Reformation destroyed the faith of ages, and men, such as Bacon, turned their attention to the study of natural science. But France for a long time persecuted those writers who departed from the ancient paths of ignorance and superstition; so that it is now the more surprising to find the whole mass of current French literature saturated with a spirit of scepticism and doubt as readily adopted as it is openly expressed. So suddenly has this happened, that ideas, and even certain phrases now in use, are the reproductions of men who, in the last century, were condemned as profligates and atheists.

The name of Jean Jacques Rousseau is one stamped for ever in the annals of French history. It would be impossible in a short space to estimate the effects which the writings of this extraordinary man produced, not only on his own country, but over the whole of the reading world. Born in humble circumstances, with little or no education except what he gave himself, and with a mind constituted to lead him into the most serious errors, the earnestness with which he pleaded for the emancipation of his fellow creatures from a socially false and injurious existence has placed him in the first rank of modern philosophers. The incidents of his varied life are too well known to need recapitulation. Indeed too much attention in biography has been bestowed on mere facts, while higher feelings, of which actions are seldom the true exponents, are passed hastily over, or altogether ignored.

The great principle of Rousseau's life,—that which in later years

became almost a disease,—was the inordinate opinion he entertained of his own importance. This vanity is the pivot on which all his actions revolved. It continually urged him into a line of conduct from which he seldom emerged but with disgrace. Witness the story of his audacity at Lausanne, where, passing himself off as a great musician, he undertook a concert at which a cantata of his own was performed, and the whole affair, of course, ended in a fiasco. This same spirit of egotism fostered that reproach of his whole life,—his heartless ingratitude towards his benefactors. Whatever may be thought of his quarrel with Hume, and subsequent conduct, it is certain that he behaved to one to whom he owed everything,—namely, Madame de Warens,—in a manner base and contemptible. It is strange to see how the absorbing passion of selfishness stunted feelings of which even creatures of a lower order are not wholly destitute. The dread of future inconvenience doubtless prompted him to consign all his illegitimate children to the Foundling of Paris. He feared to face anything unpleasant, and kept from him, as far as he could, all claims which might hereafter occasion trouble. It was not mere cowardice; for, in turning to the better side of his nature, we find an independence and bravery which never hindered him from exposing himself to difficulties and dangers. His letter of reply to the Archbishop of Paris, when “*Émile*” was condemned to be burnt, is full of boldness. It would be difficult to reconcile such an indomitable spirit with the selfishness which might have shrunk from the disagreeable consequences of public odium, did we not reflect, that perhaps the highest self-glorification is in the knowledge that the eyes of all the world are directed to one individual, and that a man’s own self. For this, many who have failed in obtaining celebrity, have been content with a poor equivalent,—notoriety. Rousseau’s love for mankind is the bright spot in his character. His was not the temperament to begin quietly to try to reform abuses; he must have publicity, however obtained, and he sacrificed many noble emotions to his idol self. But the good he did for the world must always cancel the ill he may have done to one or two. Too much is thought of a great man’s personality. He is but the instrument by which the education of man is carried on, and the trivial circumstances of his life are far removed from the power of a train which can draw towards it thousands of fellow minds. Such an one was Rousseau, whose literary influence produced a St. Pierre, a Béranger, a Chateaubriand; and whose moral teaching raised up a Napoleon and a Robespierre. It is in no ordinary way that a man can be judged whose genius gave birth to so brilliant a progeny as that which France nurtured between 1780 and 1820.

When the “*Contrat Social*” and “*Émile*” appeared, the time was ripe for their reception. The crushing despotism of Louis XIV., exercised over every branch of learning, and producing a literature

admirable in its style indeed, but entirely submissive, had reduced the mental condition of France to a state of almost servile imbecility. For half a century after Descartes, no great thinker arose until Montesquieu published his "*Esprit des Lois*," of which work it has been said the "*Contrat Social*" is the portal. When a gradual disenchantment of that protective spirit took hold of the French mind, men turned in vain to their own literature for sympathy. They despairingly cast their eyes to England, and there saw a bold mental vigour flourishing by the side of a free constitution. Eager to obtain for their own country so palpable a benefit, they did not hesitate to draw tenet after tenet, and opinion after opinion, from the English philosophers, and engraft them on to the barren soil of their own intellectually dead France. Can it be wondered that a reaction took place? The spark which illumined the smouldering fire emanated from the pen of the disciple of Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau. As his works appeared, they were everywhere seized upon and devoured. The progress of intellect was outstripping the progress of liberty. The first signal for the French Revolution was given by one, who had raised himself from the obscure position of a Genoese bourgeois to earn for his doctrines the title of the "*Gospel of Rousseau*." In one of his dissertations on the Government, after enumerating the various qualifications which would fit a people for legislation, the philosopher of democracy concludes his remarks with the almost prophetic sentence, fulfilled in a manner so foreign to his meaning:—"Il est encore en Europe un pays capable de législation, c'est l'île de Corse. La valeur et la constance avec laquelle ce brave peuple a su reconquérir et défendre sa liberté mériterait bien que quelque homme sage lui apprit à la conserver. J'ai quelque présentement qu'un jour cette petite île étonnera l'Europe." Was not the unintentional compliment more than repaid when Napoleon remarked to Girardin:—"Sans lui la France n'aurait pas eu de révolution."

Rousseau may be said to have obtained his influence over society by propagating in his own peculiarly seductive manner two doctrines most congenial to the human mind and heart,—the capacity of man for perfection, and the absorbing power of the passion of love. The "*Contrat Social*," and "*Émile*," are the well-known expression of the first; the "*Nouvelle Héloïse*," clothed in a romantic garb, is the text-book of the second. But perhaps Rousseau's most interesting work is his "*Confessions*." In these avowals are laid bare with the skilful hand of an anatomist all the inner springs and workings of that wonderful man. He spares no pains to bring forward, in the most triumphant manner, motives and thoughts which many would seek to bury for ever. Side by side with a noble sentiment of philanthropy we meet with an account of cruelty or immorality. No attempt at concealment is made, and this process of self-analysis is recommended by the writer as the most effectual means of arriving

at a perfect state. He felt a certain inherent weakness in human nature to resist temptation, and perhaps puts this forward too strongly as an apology for his many delinquencies. But he was thoroughly conscious of the moral abasement incurred by his faults, and the following passage expresses his idea of the relation between God and man :—"La vertu ne nous coûte que par notre faute, et si nous voulions être toujours sages, rarement aurions nous besoin d'être vertueux ; mais . . . nous tombons enfin dans l'abîme en disant à Dieu, 'Pourquoi m'as tu fait si faible ?' mais, malgré, nous il répond à nos consciences, 'Je t'ai fait trop faible pour sortir du gouffre, parceque je t'ai fait assez fort pour n'y pas tomber.'" There is no ignoring of a moral responsibility, but rather an over-sensitiveness on the other side. How many orthodox men have said, "Man must sin and then repent," while this so-called "atheist" forbids the thought of a necessity to sin, and scorns the querulous repentance of the world's criminals.

The essay entitled "*Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*," which failed to obtain the prize from the Academy of Dijon in 1753, is considered to be the weakest and most paradoxical of all Rousseau's writings. Here the author tries to prove that there can be no real happiness for mankind except in the savage state, and in support of his argument cites the excesses into which civilisation has plunged humanity. But the excitability of his imagination has led him on this subject to outstep the bounds of reason, and filled his brain with the most obvious errors. The Law of Nature, the "*Jus Naturæ*" of the Romans, was that theory of jurisprudence to which the French lawyers had always been most strongly attached. But Rousseau, mistaking in his zeal the true meaning of the term "*Law of Nature*," evolved from his consideration of it, his astounding doctrine of the state of nature. Fascinated with the levelling tendency of the "*Jus Naturæ*," under which he conceived man in his primitive condition to have flourished, he interprets in his own fashion the Stoic's tenet of "living according to nature," and, perverting the principle that all men are equal, into the doctrine that all men ought to be so, bitterly contrasts the present with the past. Henceforth the "*Law of Nature*" is to imply not what, under its more peculiar title of "*Jus Gentium*," all codes impregnated with Roman law have adopted,—namely, the embracing under one extended form of practice all mankind on the common ground of humanity,—but a perfect, unassisted, state of nature, wherein all forms and order whatsoever are to disappear. An epoch of social equality, of annihilation of law, of destruction to religion, is to be unhesitatingly looked for as the return of the vanished Arcadia of ideal man ! Such were the doctrines, propounded with all the plausibility and sentiment of which their author was so great a master, and which nourished the minds of the French people during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Intense love for these doctrines touched the hearts of the whole nation; and a generous sympathy with the "apostle of freedom" drew towards him all who read his works. Thus he fed them. Strong food, indeed; unfitted for many. He himself says of his "Contrat Social," that it was written, not for men, but for angels; and though in his creed sentiment took the place of belief and shadows of realities, he yet supplied the yearning for faith and support which every human heart must feel, when the ancient religion is swept away, and the time-honoured superstition denounced as a hollow mockery and lie.

That Rousseau considered his own doctrines as hardly applicable to the present generation, cannot be doubted. It is true that through the medium of his "Émile," many habits most prejudicial to the rearing of young children were happily laid aside; but his moral course of training was condemned by every party, religious or social. In his horror of the unnatural system under which, as he thought, children were brought up, he desired to throw away all influences that come through conventionality or religion, and drew a picture of a gentle youth growing up to manhood untainted by any preconceived ideas of God or morality. But he oversteps the mark. Much that tends to produce a happy and cultivated man is due to the early impressions he receives. But to bring up a child totally bereft of those aids by which human nature is toned down and educated, and expect him to find his proper place in society, would be as wild a scheme as introducing a savage into the world of letters, and expecting them to coalesce. Rousseau deified human nature so far, as to believe it capable of perfection at the period when it is in reality only just beginning to see light. Men, young men especially, are sometimes hindered from the full exercise of their reason by prejudices and opinions imbibed in their youth. But it might prove a rash experiment to ignore, and take away, a system which experience has shown to be the one most fitted for the education of men generally. The remark of Rousseau, when introduced by a father to his boy, educated on the principles of "Émile," "So much the worse for you and your son, too," is no unfair estimate of the effect of these chimerical opinions on ninety-nine men out of a hundred.

"La Nouvelle Héloïse" is the book in which Rousseau appears as the "apostle of love." Opposite notions will always be entertained of his sincerity in speaking on this subject. To some, his passionate outbursts serve but to conceal the grossest sensualism; while, on the other hand, the letters between Julie and her lover are considered the most exalted expression of a perfect love. The confidences exchanged between the lovers may seem coarse and vulgar; but it must be remembered that in those days such feelings were less carefully veiled than is now the case. The author of those letters knew how to appreciate the faintest essence of that sentiment which often

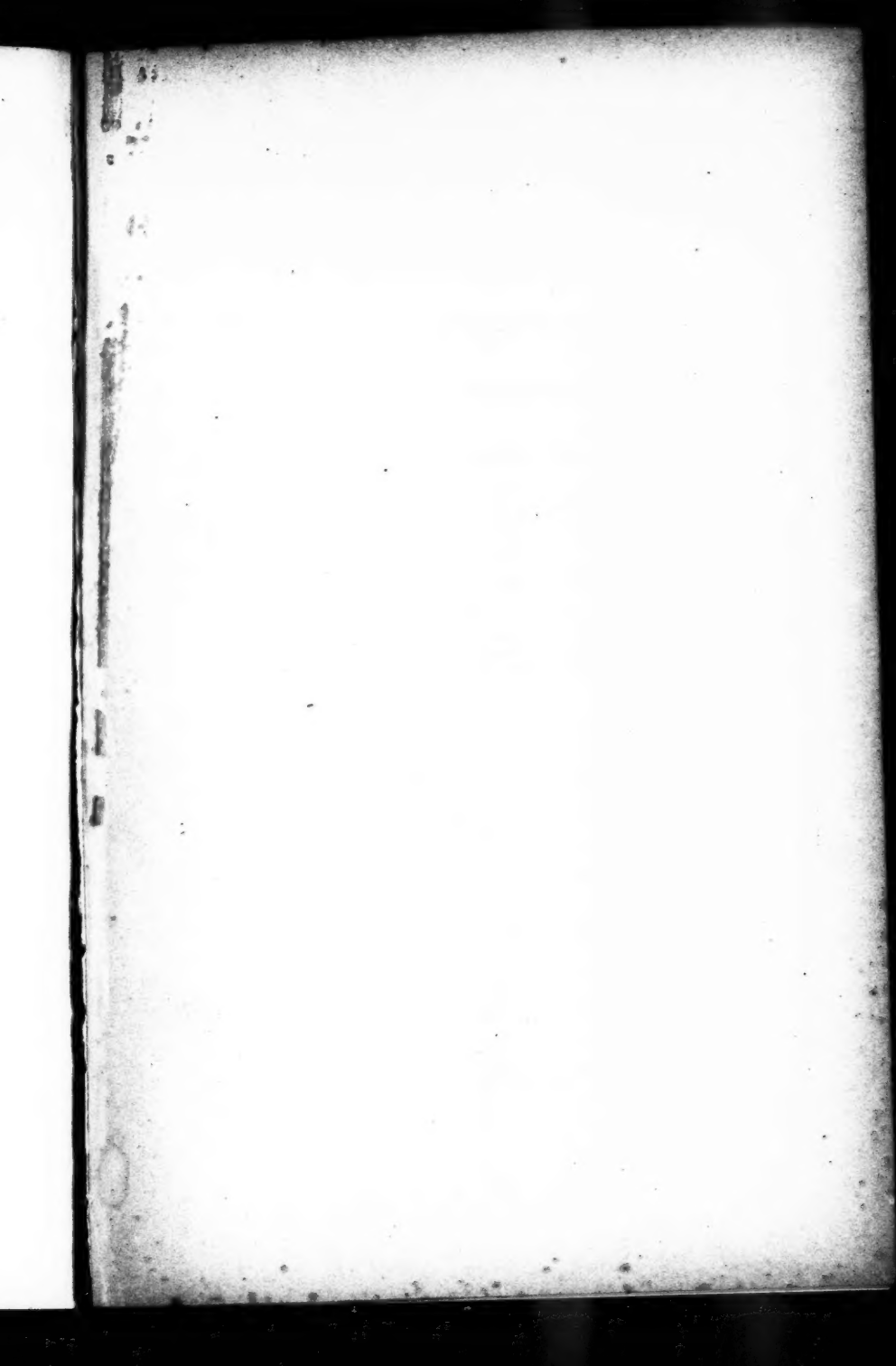
enough passes for a higher feeling, and delighted to paint in the most glowing colours the real or fancied delicias of such a passion. His love is declamatory, not silent; and, like all Frenchmen, he is ecstatic and sensuous. But he obeyed the instincts of a higher morality than that with which the world credited him,—in his fiction, by respecting the sanctity of the marriage-vow; and in real life, by perhaps satisfying the exigencies of a conscience in marrying, after years of unwedded existence, his mistress, Thérèse Levasseur. Again, of that unfortunate occurrence when, in the case of a petty theft, he allowed the blame incurred by himself to rest on an innocent maid-servant, he speaks in after-life with feelings of shame and remorse. Assuredly there was no lacking of the perception which distinguishes a moral from an immoral action, and raises a man from the level of a brute. But the charge of infidelity has been the one most bitterly urged against Rousseau, and too hastily believed. He may have flung away the semblances of a religious faith in his dread of superstition; but in his writings there is not to be found one single attack upon Christianity itself. The sarcastic mockeries of Voltaire found no response in his heart. By his own friends,—by men such as Diderot or Helvetius,—he was ridiculed as a bigot; and Holbach, who boasted that he had entertained seventeen atheists at dinner in one day, never included Rousseau in his circle. Though, in accordance with the affected assumptions of the school of Voltaire, he treated the authority of the Old Testament as in no way reliable,—is this new in the present day?—his letter to M. d'Alembert may sufficiently indicate his opinions:—"Nul n'est plus pénétré que moi d'amour et de respect pour le plus sublime de tous les livres; il me console et m'instruit tous les jours, quand les autres ne m'inspirent plus que du dégoût. Mais je soutiens, que si l'Ecriture elle-même nous donnait de Dieu quelque idée indigne de lui, il faudrait la rejeter en cela, comme vous rejetez en géométrie les démonstrations qui mènent à des conclusions absurdes; car de quelque authenticité que puisse être le texte sacré, il est encore plus croyable que la Bible soit altérée, que Dieu injuste ou malfaisant." And again, we quote from "*Émile*":—"J'avoue que la majesté des Écritures m'étonne; la sainteté de l'Evangile parle à mon cœur. . . . Se peut-il qu'un livre à la fois si sublime et si simple soit l'ouvrage des hommes? Quels préjugés, quel aveuglement, ne faut-il point avoir, pour oser comparer le fils de Sophronisque au fils de Marie! Quelle distance de l'un à l'autre! Oui, si la vie et la mort de Socrate sont d'un sage; la vie et la mort de Jésus sont d'un Dieu."

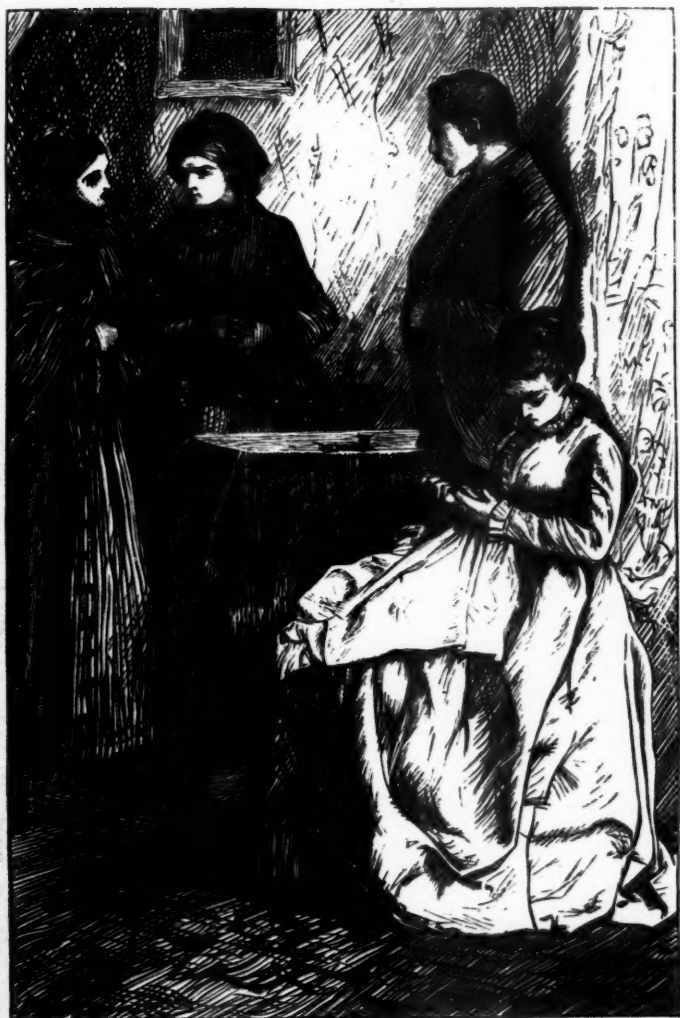
In an age of religious intolerance, expressions such as these could scarcely fail to occasion some alarm. But the question may be asked, are they advanced enough for the present day? Does not a spirit of free speech and inquiry pervade the whole tone of society? Do we not, even in high places, meet with opinions at least as outspoken as

those used by the author of "*Émile*?" If such an one is to be branded with the stigma of atheism, the accusation may come nearer home than could be desirable. Measured by the standard of to-day, the idle charges of infidelity and immorality lose much of their acrimony.

In short, had Rousseau written in 1870 instead of in 1760, his works would have occasioned little surprise or scandal, and he himself would perhaps have been considered as a brilliant, but somewhat superficial essayist. It may be said that the ideas contained in the "*Contrat Social*," for instance, could not now appear with any pretence of originality. The ground has been too well worn. Granted; but how much is due to the man who first dared sow the seed which has brought forth fruit so plentifully? Objections such as were raised a hundred years ago would not now be dreamt of. Criticism would take a new line; attack the premises from which such strange conclusions were drawn, and point out flaws in the argument; or more probably sneer at the zeal and fervour of the author. But to burn the "*Émile*," because it uprooted old ideas, or contained sentiments of rather too ambiguous a nature, would never enter any reasonable man's head. Blind reverence for authority, *quâ* authority, is dying out. People dare to talk of things in a manner calculated to make their grandfathers turn in their graves, could they listen. The old forms of the religious spirit,—without which spirit we shall never live, let the forms take what shape they may,—are losing their hold on men's minds. What is to take their place it yet remains to be seen.

That we are entering upon a new era of thought seems quite evident. Whether, as M. Comte and his school imply, the world is now to content itself with the creed of a social Positivism, having science for its subject, and humanity for its object; or whether an æsthetic culture is to modify all that remains crude and imperfect in man; or again, Christianity is to take a more expansive form than hitherto; these things are yet undecided. But by all the change is considered as at hand. Progress is an acknowledged law. We adapt ourselves to its mandates, and in turn are adapted by it to its workings. A larger sympathy, a wider belief, a nobler aim,—these are inevitable. And this it is that men, struggling with themselves, have endeavoured to teach. Rousseau's social equality, and wild speculations are but his efforts to proclaim the brotherhood of man. Let that common unity once be felt, and mutual aid will make the rest easy. A new life begins; one of action, not preaching. Many shudder at the thought of this change. But let such not be offended. The past has done its work well in furnishing the stepping stones by which the future shall rise.





Alice bent trembling over her work.